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John o' Arnha's

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1882

Latter-Day



Exploits.







JOHN O' ARNHA'S
LATTER-DAY EXPLOITS

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

THOMAS MAIR.

With a Portrait of John, and his Autograph.

"Arnha virumque cano."—(*Virgil.*)

ABERDEEN :
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.
1882.

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NOTE OF INTRODUCTION.

MANY Aberdonians of the present generation will not have read "John o' Arnha'," a poem which appeared about the time of Waterloo, and of which the author was George Beattie, a townsman of Montrose. A highly ludicrous feature attaching to the poem is that John of Arnha', whose marvellous exploits it narrates, was no absolute myth, but an individual of somewhat contemptible presence and stature, whose native place was Arnhall, in the neighbourhood of Montrose. John had so far given way to a human weakness, that by his own account of himself he was a man of prodigious personal strength, and of valour unspeakable. Although he had seldom been beyond the bounds of his native horizon, he was wont to tell of his experiences in the army, where he had highly distinguished himself, and of his strange adventures and hairbreadth escapes in every quarter of the earth. To use his own words, as given by Beattie—

"Upon the sedgy banks o' Nile
I've tilted wi' the crocodile ;
Upon the coasts o' Labrador
I've heard five hunner kelpies roar."

He had picked up a knowledge of languages in his chequered career, and the following sample of his Latin is given by his knavish Boswell—

“Rumelforgan bardinarus
 Hoo nig fig gnipitti gnarus
 Drumhargelbargum skipperatis,” &c.

So long had John indulged in self-glorifying narrative that it was doubtful if he had not come to have a hazy belief in the reality of some of his exploits. He was an established character in Montrose, and contemporary with Beattie, and it was his well-known weakness which incited the latter to immortalise him in song, to the hero's unutterable disgust.

The following narratives have not necessarily to be read in connection with the great original work, but are detached episodes in Arn's varied and eventful history. They are understood to belong to the afternoon of his life, when he had in great measure given up the adventurous career into which in his hot-blooded days he had been led by sheer love of fighting and danger. He had come to reside more habitually on his croft at Arnha', and his great strength and valour were only occasionally called into play, and then only in the interests of justice and humanity.

ARN AT THE FLAIL.

Part First.

JOHN AT HIS WARK.

'Twas on a simmer's afternoon,
The sultry sun was blazin' roun',
When wi' his flail heroic Arn
Was thrashin' barley in his barn.
The peace o' simmer wrappit a'
Baith out and in at Arnha',
Contrastin' fair wi' mony a scene
Where Arn had ance an actor been.
But here his valour had nae scope,
Nor theme for due expatiation,
But languished like a barber's craft
Amid a hirsute generation.

And so the airts o' peace he plied,
His moleskin coat was laid aside ;
It was a bonnie sight to see
The way he gart the barley flee ;

O' sheaves if he had got his wull
 He would hae beat a thrashin' mull.
 The tool he used was like himsel',
 Nae spurtle-legged flimsy flail,
 Himsel' had fashioned it out o'
 Mahogany in Borneo—
 The finest tree in a' the isle
 Selectit wi' his utmost wile ;
 And at the joint the legs were tied
 Wi' hippopotamus's hide.
 He would na risk the couplin' on
 Till proved by liftin' twenty ton.
 He greased it up religiously
 Wi' ointment frae the tanneree.

The flail was dyed a dismal hue
 Wi' Indians' bleed o' Cariboo,
 And dintit o'er wi' mony a mark
 And token o' heroic wark.

But while he thrashed wi' force and zeal
 He heard a horse's clatterin' heel—
 A rider dashed into the close,
 It was the Provost o' Montrose.
 His hat was aff, his siller hair
 Stood like a hat brush i' the air,
 He leukit like a huntit hare,
 And shouted frae his reekin' horse—
 "O John, ye are our last resource !
 I hinna breath or time to tell,
Disaster like it ne'er befell

Within the history o' our toon,
 Or since its hillocks owned a foun'.
 A great wild beast menagerie
 (The deevil tak' their plan)
 Cam' roun' and in the market square
 Set up their caravan.
 Wi' trumpets, cornets, rollin' drums,
 They opened doors at twa—
 Five hun'er citizens were there,
 My patronage an' a',
 But ere the exhibition closed
 Our sang grew unco sma'.

"For while we fancied a' secure
 And glowered and gapit there,
 A keeper opened up a door
 To rouse the Greenlan' bear ;
 When like an arrow frae a bow
 The cunnin' monster boltit thro'.
 Auld fisher Meggie, John, ye'll mind
 On her—I needna speer—
 We've heard her cryin' stinkin' skate
 This mony a weary year.
 The queen o' tinkler trumpet tongues—
 Nae mair we'll hear her yabble—
 When Bruin got her in his claw
 And caught her by the thrapple
 She skirled her hin'most even as swine
 Skirl when their time has come,
 But when he tore her win'pipe out
 She suddenly grew dumb.

“ But what cam’ after this was mair
 Surpassin’ in degree
Than hieroglyphics o’ the Nile
 Unto the A B C.
The keepers laid upo’ the bear,
 He slew them man by man,
And envious o’ his bloody luck,
 The total pack began
A roarin’ most carnivorous
 A’ roun’ the caravan ;
They dashed against the iron bars
 And splintered bolts and rivets,
And lions, tigers, jaguars,
 Cam’ bungin’ oot like divots.
The crowd were squeezin’ at the door
 And fleein’ hame like deer,
They rowed o’er ither’s heeds and yelled
 And warsled i’ the fleer.
And, to my credit be it said,
 I was amo’ the last,
And ye may guess how near a shave
 For life or death I passed—
A tiger clutched my swallow-tails
 And modified their pride,
But changed his mind and cabbaged up
 A tailor at my side.
And when I got ayont the door
 I slammed it at my heels,
For a’ the audience that was left
 I heard their dying squeals.

I had the door securely fast,
 But kentna what to do,
 And would hae sickened in despair
 But that I min'ed on you."

Now John wha leaned upon his flail
 And leukit unco gruff,
 His sneeshin-mull into his hand,
 Took out a pinch o' snuff,
 And held it at his nose a space,
 And leukit wi' a sairious face.
 Again the Provost murmured, "John,
 Ye'll get your wull o' sword or gun,
 A coat o' mail we'll busk you in
 To keep their clutches frae your skin—
 Ye'll try if something can be done."

But John took up the Taddy powder,
 And flang the flail oot owre his shou'der,
 And said, "We sanna fash wi' mail ;
 But dinna ye disturb yoursel',
 I'm middlin' active at the flail,
 I'll maybe mak' a shift wi' it,
 At onyrate we'se try—
 I'm sair concerned to hear your news,
 We'll tak' a step down bye."

The Provost leukit keen, and Arn
 Took twa-three glances roun' the barn,
 And gathered up his moleskin coat
 And took his pocket-nepkin oot.

He thocht he wouldna seek the coat,
And hang't upon a pin,
And then drew tee the barn door
For fear the hens wan in.

His face wi' honest purpose glowed,
The flail he shouldered *a la mode*,
And wi' the Provost took the road.



Part Second.

JOHN'S ENTRY INTO MONTROSE.

Wi' doors and windows boltit ticht,
 Nae worthy citizens that nicht
 Upo' the streets war seen ;
 Retreated up their topmost stairs
 The mighty men were at their prayers,
 Auld wife and maiden green,
 The diner-out, the humble poor
 Whose stomachs know but second flour,
 Were shiverin' i' their sheen.

They cried, " O Wombell, thine accurst
 Menagerie will soon
 Be a' the undisputed lords
 And lieges o' our toon !
 The king o' beasts will rule by day,
 And jackal tribes will hunt their prey
 And howl beneath the moon !
 The Polar bear will lick his lips
 O'er tallow-chandlers' grease,
 And Bengal tigers masticate
 Fathers of families !
 They'll swallow preachers i' their wrath,
 Attorneys i' their ire,
 And interdicts allenarly
 And diligence expire —

Nae *Habeas Corpus* act avail
To keep their skins entire."

But some there were that had a hope
Wha frae their windows saw
The Provost mounted on his steed
Ride aff for Arnha'.
But yet they quakit i' their skins
And to their altars ran
As ever and anon the roar
Cam' frae the caravan.
Sometimes it lulled when a' the core
Perchance were lappin' human gore
Like cats amo' the cream ;
Exuberant wi' joy again
A general Donnybrook would reign,
And roarin' be supreme.

But dowie hearts lap up again
The Provost when they saw,
And at a rakin' stride wi' him
Come John o' Arnha'.
The causey to his tackets rang,
The flail oot owre his shou'der hang,
The souple swingin' at his back,
His bonnet i' the upper hac'.
The Provost at an eident trot
He keepit at his heel,
And cries o' welcome and relief
Did frae the windows peal.

The lieges gathered heart tho' yet
 They shook wi' hopes and fears,
 And littlens, tho' they kentna why,
 Began to dry their tears.
 And auld and young hallooed to John,
 "Gweed speed ye o' your road—
 Ye wunna lat oor toon be made
 For satyrs an abode."
 But John made unco sma' remark,
 He wasna wantin' words but wark ;
 As ben the street his legs he streekit
 They noticed that—his nivv was steekit.

The roarin' had been fierce but noo
 Terrific to a pitch it grew,
 It would hae gart Napoleon flinch
 But Arn never veered an inch,
 Although they had a furlong yet
 To reach the caravan
 Zoology rejoined within
 Like thunner hard at han'.

The roars o' tigers, jaguars,
 And panthers never slackened,
 Hyaenas', wolves', and jackals' cries
 Were fifty to the second.
 The lions lifted up their voice
 And roared wi' double vengeance,
 And hard at wark the elephants
 Were hostin' on like engines.

The leopard roared wi' micht and main,
 The cameleopard mourned,
 And Polar bears and grisly bears
 A thorough bass returned.

The wild boar o' the Pyrenees
 Was grindin' an alarm,
 And monkeys' tongues were rattlin' on
 Like windmills in a storm.
 Ourang-outangs made sinfu' soun's,
 Chimpanzes, lemurs, and baboons,
 Wi' monkeys o' a baser sort
 The tough rhinoceros did snort.
 The albatross and penguin cried,
 The hippopotamus replied ;
 The vulture screamed, the zebra neighed,
 The wild ass of Assyria brayed ;
 The song of horned owls was there,
 The dromedary's groan ;
 The dismal quack o' pelicans
 Cam' ever and anon.
 Alpacas bleating evermore —
 And most uncommon soun's
 Frae lamas, elands, hartebeestes,
 Ichneumons, and racoons.

But Arn now was at the door
 Regairdless o' the compound roar,
 And anxious hundreds o' the toon
 Beheld him frae the windows roun' ;

They saw him enter at the door,
 And shudderin' they saw,
 He turned about and shut himsel'
 Within amo' them a'
 As coolly as if that had been
 The door o' Arnha'.
 They saw the Provost tak' a rope
 And sicker up the door
 Afore he scampered to escape
 The openin' o' the splore.
 And this he did at the express
 Request o' John himsel',
 For fear o' ony orra tyke
 Escapin' frae his flail.

But now when ilka neck was stretched
 And expectation keen,
 Nae sign o' Arn's presence there
 The langest lug could glean.
 The savage roars were rollin' on,
 But neither less nor mair,
 And half the citizens returned
 Into their first despair,
 And cried that John himsel' was lost,
 But some had better trust,
 And vowed afore they worried John
 That he would raise a dust.

But minutes crawled wi' hourly length
 And yet they couldna hail

The outburst o' hostilities,
 The thud o' Arn's flail.
 And even his believers sat
 Wi' faces unco lang,
 Till a' at ance a shock was felt
 That gart the houses bang.
 They sprang upo' their feet, nor drew
 A breath nor uttered word,
 Until like cannon shot there fell
 A second and a third.

The reefu' rair o' savage throats
 Was heard at Kirriemuir—
 As if it smote on beef, there cam'
 A squash wi' ilka scour.
 But even then half-smothered rose
 The halleluias o' Montrose,
 For now by ilka dismal yark
 They kent that Arn was at wark.



Part Third.

JOHN AT THE FLAIL.

“ He gart their carcase sweep the stanners,
Whilk made a noise like barn fanners.”

—JOHN O' ARNEA'.

For so it was when John had entered
Where nae man but himsel' had ventured,
He found in front a tattered screen,
And thus his entrance wasna seen.
And here he hovered for a space,
And through an opening scanned
The bloody revelry that soon
Would try his hero-hand.
Wild beasts o' strange and divers kinds
Like ony market bus'led,
The air was thick wi' fleein' birds
That quackit, screamed, and whus'led.
Aboot a flail-length frae his nose
Upo' the gory stanes,
Lions and tigers in a heap
Were pickin' human banes.
They growled and quarreled, fought and tore,
Wi' never-endin' din,
While some were roarin' i' their dens,
Or jumpin oot and in.
The May-pole o' the borough stood
Aboot the centre o' the space—

A monkey perched upo' the top
 Lugubrious i' the face.
 For half-way up a grizzly bear
 Wi' *mal prepense* did climb,
 Wi' paw o'er paw he wriggled up,
 A paw's breadth at a time.
 When sair forfeuchen wi' the task
 He leuket o'er his heed,
 And seemed to find refreshment thus
 And fusion to proceed;
 Wi' ursine perseverance bent
 Upo' the monkey's bleed.
 The dolefu' monkey now had ceased
 Frae a' unseemly tricks,
 And seemed to think his precious hide
 In an infernal fix.
 The coming bear drew nigh, there lay
 But half an ell between,
 And even in his solemn eye
 A twinkle micht be seen.
 When a' at ance the monkey took
 A jump o' bious length,
 An' lichtin' o' the vans obtained
 His brethren's place of strength;
 And glintin' thro' the iron bars
 In irony did howl—
 The bear was sold, and doon the pole
 Cam' slippin' wi' a growl.

 But now when Arn leukit doon
 Upo' the feastin' crew,

A lion, risin' up disclosed
 A skeleton to view.
 Nae vestige o' the flesh remained,
 The verra banes were crumbled,
 A' save a timmer leg whereat
 A panther gnawed and grumbled.
 But by that verra token John
 Perceived their feast had been
 The Chartist souter that for years
 Had made his Sunday sheen.
 And John, tho' used to mony a dire
 And bloody scene, began to fire ;
 He min'ed upon his stock in trade,
 His sole and upper leather,
 His tackets, birse, and elisons,
 A jum'led up thegither.
 He whuppit oot his sneeshin-mull,
 And gae his nose a special full,
 Dispensin' wi', or else forgettin',
 Afore that Waterloo o' Satan,
 His usual twa-three social knoecks
 Upo' the hatchw'y o' the box.
 Then for the freedom o' his back
 He gae his gallawses a slack,
 And wi' a wallop o' his airm
 He laid aside the veil,
 And full in view he faced the crew,
 And brandishin' his flail,
 Afore they could believe their eyen
 Tho' glowerin' in a ring—

Afore the sinews o' their legs
 Could set themselves to spring—
 He drew the first tremendous whack
 That gart the borough ring.

It took the panther o'er the back,
 And gart his spinal column crack,
 His body halvered wi' the blow
 That split the verra stanes below.
 The souter's leg o' British oak,
 That, proof to mony a trial,
 Had borne him lang thro' thick and thin
 Was splintered like a phial.

A royal lion and his spouse,
 Their gullets gorged wi' slaughter,
 The flail o' retribution now
 Like burstin' bombs did squatter.
 The leopards caught a flattenin' blow,
 The polar bears the next, but now
 A tiger clutched wi' teeth and nail
 Upo' the thrasher o' the flail,
 And clung altho' it waved again,
 But little odds did Arn ken ;
 And when the flail oot owre his heed
 In perihelium swung,
 Like nutmeg frae a catapult,
 It gart the tiger fung.
 Oot thro' the canvas roof he flew,
 And fifty feet abeen,

And by the people his ascent
 Was like a draygon seen.
 And when he fell his splintered banes
 Cam' thro' his brindled hide ;
 But " Arn " only, solemnly
 The multitude replied.

And thro' an openin' i' the roof, ·
 By whilk the tiger tore,
 The winged tribes to Wombell dear
 Cam' fleein' oot galore,
 And wi' the cries o' jubilee
 Dispersed to meet no more.
 Bustards and parrots, eagles, owls,
 Did to the Grampians flee ;
 Flamingoes, dodos, pelicans
 And penguins, to the sea.
 And frae the carnage they beheld
 The battered brains and gore
 Gae down the street in rivulets,
 As in a thunder-shower.

And still they heard the steady flail
 Amid infernal roars,
 For Arn now was dealin' death
 Amo' the mountain boars.
 His first reliance was the flail,
 And secondly, the flail—
 And thirdly, even to the end,
 Unqualified, the flail.

But now an elephant cam' on
 The bloody row to redd,
 His trunk was wallop'in', the earth
 Resounded to his tread.
 Howbeit he leukit unco dull
 When Arn took him ower the skull ;
 He hostit till the waggons shook,
 And staggered roun' and roun' ;
 But while he reeled the flail again
 Like thunner bolt cam' doon.
 His trunk, and tusks, and mighty skull,
 To sudden grief did come,
 His alimentary canal
 Exploded like a bomb.

A jerboa rat, a civet cat,
 For and a whip-poor-will,
 Were smashed, for a' thing now was grist
 That cam' to Arn's mull.
 The tiger legions rallied yet
 Wi' bloody teeth and nail,
 And charged again, but hip and thigh
 He smote them wi' his flail.
 Oppossums, pole and other cats,
 The otter and the goat,
 Ornithorhynchuses and bats
 After their kinds he smote.
 On vertebrata families
 And tribes his wrath was poured—
 Rodentia, pachydermata,
Impartially he cloured.

But now a hippopotamus
 Ferociously cam' on ;
 The grim direction o' his stride
 Was resolute for John.
 His horrible resemblance was
 To nightmare i' the dreams
 O' him within whose stomach gross
 A heavy supper reams ;
 His yawn was like a cavern's gorge,
 His teeth like weaver's beams.

But John drew back a rapid stride,
 To gi'e his flail an orbit wide ;
 And took him ower the heed a sweep
 That splashed it like a rotten neep.
 But yet his body's bulk survived
 On massive legs below,
 As if defying time and tide
 And a' the winds that blow.
 But John one fearfu' rackart took,
 And squashed him like a rodden-fluke ;
 When on the causey flattened then
 He stretched eleven ell by ten ;
 But Arn plied his flail amain ;
 He scourged the floor frae left to richt,
 And then frae richt to left,
 Till heeds and legs, and bloody skins,
 Æsephaguses, tripes, and spines
 Were fleein' roun' like drift.

But now nae mair frae savage throats

The horrid roars were brewin' ;

Their choral union had collapsed

In *grande finale* ruin.

The people, listenin' pale and dumb,

Could mark the total silence come,

A' save the steady flail that smashed

The pavement blocks to shingle—

And yet it fell wi' fiercer force,

And gart their pantries jingle.

For Arn's blood was fairly up—

When victim there was nane,

He plied the carnage wi' his flail,

And plaistered bleed and bane.

Wi' ilka crash a bloody squash

Would dye the white marquee ;

And doon the street the splintered banes

Gaed hurlin' wi' the bree.

The Provost and the Magistrates

Were heark'nin' at the door,

And after twa-three fearfu' thuds

The flail was heard no more ;

And a' was silence now within,

Until that Arn sneezed,

And then ejaculated "aye,"

Like ane a kin' o' pleased ;

And wi' his pocket-nepkin ga'e

His nose a Scottish tout,

And, meek in utter triumph, cried,

"An' ye would lat me oot."

They drew the door, while at the kirk
 The bellman rang the bell ;
 But great was their astonishment
 When Arn like himsel',
 Upon a great rhinoceros,
 Cam' ridin' wi' his flail.

For even when John was flailin' tribes
 O' a' denomination,
 The beast stood by, and sometimes ga'e
 A grunt o' approbation.
 And John, altho' baith sma' and great
 He flailed without remorse,
 Was pleased to see the beast adop'
 Sae sensible a course ;
 And when the row was o'er they baith
 Drew up to ane anither,
 And shortly grew as trusty frien's
 As han' and glaive thegither.
 And Arn, mountin' on his back,
 Rade oot amo' them a',
 And set his allugrugous snout
 The w'y o' Arn ha'.

The grateful people in his train
 Cam' furth and cheered wi' nicht and main
 With wild hurrahs they followed on,
 And never seemed to fag—
 The Magistrates, the rich and poor,
 And bob-tail tag-an'-rag.

But John put on a swingin' trot
And left them i' the rear,
But tho' they couldna follow on,
They keepit up the cheer.
Till ower a knowe he disappeared,
Rhinoceros an' a';
But at a steady trot the beast
Gaed on to Arn ha',
And Arn took him to the byre,
And tied him in a sta'.

He lived on bark and meadow hay,
He drew a fur like twenty steers,
And Arn ploughed his grun' wi' him,
And harrowed—many years.



ARN AT THE WHALE FISHING.

Part First.

“ The Kelpie tried wi’ John to grapple,
But Arn claught him by the thrapple.”

—JOHN O’ ARNHA’.

Now John when he had lived awa’,
Some twa-three years at Arnha’,
Slow foggin’ in a peacefu’ haven,
Again began to feel a cravin’
For something o’ the sturt and strife
That he had known in younger life—
He’d tak’ a trip to Peterheid
Afore the hurry o’ the “ seed.”

So wi’ his staff into his hand,
And cheese and bannocks at command,
He took the road afore it dawned,
And wi’ a lick o’ extra speed
He entered into Peterheid
Aboot the settin’ o’ the sun,
A little tired, but far frae done,

And munchin' at his bread and cheese
 He took a walk about the quays.
 But word brak' oot that he was come,
 And a' the toon was in a hum.
 The Council solemnly exprest,
 That he should be the Provost's guest,
 And John consentit wi' a grudge,
 He didna care about a "fudge."

And so the supper was got through,
 And when the bowl o' punch was low,
 Says John, "I hae a sma' bit schame
 I'd like to try ere I gae hame.
 Thro' thick and thin I've come and gane,
 And been in mony a clime ye ken ;
 But I would like to try my luck at
 Yet ae thing or I kick the bucket.
 This twa-three seasons I've been wishin'
 A trial o' the Greenlan' fishin' ;
 If ye could get me on a whaler,
 Altho' nae muckle o' a sailor,
 I'se bear a han' amo' the crew,
 And tak' my turn o' what's ado,
 And try to fess her hame a bumper,
 But wi' precowtion nae to swamp her."
 "Ye'se get a passage," quo' the Provost,
 "To Greenlan' or where'er thou rovest."

At last they bade "Gweed nicht," and John
 Into a bedroom fine was shown ;

But there when he was left alane
 He leukit roun' wi' some disdeen
 Upo' the fire, upo' the bed,
 An' there a warmin' pan displayed—
 "Drumhargelbargum skipperatis"—
 He took it for an insult gratis ;
 He hadna wull o' sic device—
 His blood was up for enterprise—
 He drew the sash and jumpit doon
 To tak' his chance aneth the moon.
 For he would brave it as of old
 Thro' torrid heat or Arctic cold,
 Sic auld-wife cosy comforts scornin'—
 And so the Provost i' the mornin',
 As was his custom, walkin' roun',
 Cam' plump upon him sleepin' soun'
 Upon a heap o' turnpike metal
 Wi' edges like a broken kettle,
 And ower his legs had Arn rankit
 A harl o' chips by wye o' blanket.

The Provost, tho' he seemed to ken
 That John had notions o' his ain,
 Oot ower the snorin' hero bent
 In terrible astonishment,
 And roared " O, John, ye're surely daft ;
 Fat maggot or magician's craft
 To this infernal quarters led ye ?"
 " Ahoy !" says John, " is brakfast ready ?"
 Wi' that he warsled frae the stanners,
 " Whilk made a noise like barn fanners."

They strolled into the house debatin',
 And found the breakfast ready waitin'—
 Hot rolls and coffee, toast and butter,
 Wi' ornament o' cup and platter.
 Says John, "And hae ye naething better
 Than coffee, tea, and sic traleel?—
 Fess ben a peck or so o' meal.
 Hallo there, lassie! an' a caup—
 An' I'se gie you my mornin' 'bapp.'"
 Again the Provost looked amazed,
 And thocht his visitor was crazed,
 But Arn, while he steered his brose,
 Says, "Man, ye little would suppose
 The dishes savage and outre
 I've had to stomach i' my day.
 There's ance, when I was crossin' Cheena,
 That time I travelled frae Mount Seena,
 I stop't a while wi' ane ca'd Hang,
 Wha keep't a kin' o' restaurang,
 Wi' twa-three o' the same kin-kine,
 A' ceevil tongued and sleek as swine.
 I stoppit there a week or so,
 And, for my insicht, they would show
 The different dishes o' their country,
 Like rottan pie or poddick untry.
 They kent I had a few rupees,
 And so, to come for legatees,
 They tried me on wi' 'strychnia' pottage,
 But, saul! they fand me rather Scottish.
 I kent the dodge as seen's I tastit.
But suppit on and made the best o't;

I finished half the dish, and faith,
 Tho' ilka sup near took my breath ;
 And, then for proof o' their design
 Set up a skirlin' like a swine ;
 I kickit like a knockit steer,
 And then lay streekit o' the fleer.
 Wi' that the nickumly Chinese
 Cam' swarmin' roun' about like bees,
 And crawin' crouse to ane anither,
 Began to leuk what they could gather.

I rase and gae mysel' a shak'
 That gart the knaves leuk blue and black—
 I steps across and locks the door,
 Tak's up my cudgel frae the floor—
 Says I, " My lads I've had my share
 O' that same pottage sittin' there ;
 Sup oot the lave an' had your tongue—
 See there's the pottage—or the rung !"
 They bowed and vowed they warna hungry ;
 They screeched and bade me nae get angry ;
 Till brandishin' my stick I papps
 The nearest scoundrel's skull to shaups.
 The neist took up the speen apace,
 But yarned aff an endless grace,
 Till I gart him begin and sup,
 An' half a speenfu' laid him up
 Like bowster dirdin' o' the floor,
 He jist cried " yung," and a' was ower.
 The neist ane took a crackit croon,
 The neist the pottage, and so on ;

But ere I turned and took my leave,
I had them cured o' a' mischief.

But we maun skip a day or twa,
And has'en faster on ;
Our task is but to chronicle
Ae sma' exploit o' John.



Part Second.

The ship is buskit for the sea,
 The crew are musterin' frae the spree ;
 A penny fiddler o' the deck
 Is scourin' " Cock-a-bendy,"
 And fisher wives affectionate
 Are skirlin' " Luck attend ye ;"
 When John himsel' cam' sclunshin down
 Oot owre his shouther bearin'
 A stanchion some three ells in length
 That he had been preparin',
 O' hammered iron made throughout—
 For mair description savin'
 We'll furnish in its proper place
 A marginal engravin'.

The smith that made it won'ered sair,
 While Arn gae directions,
 An' when he cam' on board the crew
 Had quizzical reflections.
 And now for this, and now for that
 Intention fell they guessed it,
 But Arn let them guess awa',
 Nor explanation wastit.

He bore the ponderous tool oot owre
 His shouther wi' a' easedom ;
 Altho' some twa-three hun'erwecht,
 He wauged it like a besom.

When John appeared amo' the crowd,
 And owre the gangway stoutly strode,
 They cheered and gart the fiddler dreel,
 Like fury " Lord Macdonald's Reel,"
 And " See the Conquering Hero come"—
 Says John, " But keep your fiddler dumb
 Till I come back—If back I come ;"
 And to the scuppers stridin' on,
 He laid his apparatus doon.

They weigh the anchor now to start,
 And ilka man and boy
 Is heavin' at the cable strong,
 Wi' mony a roar " Ahoy."
 When John *drumharglin'* to assist
 Did owre the bulwarks lean,
 And han' o'er han' he pulled it up,
 And laid it past him leen.
 The sailors glowered, and some let fa',
 In sheer amaze, their han'spokes,
 But Arn only pecht and said,
 " I wat it's no a ban'-box !"

And now they sail the Northern seas,
 And o' the fourteenth day
In Davis Straits they made a halt,
 And leukit for their prey.

But when they saw the biggest whale
 That ever yet was seen,
 To John's disgust they a' exclaimed—
 " We'll lat that lad alane,
 We've kent him weel this twenty years,
 He doesna care a whistle
 For a' oor airt—he's stickin' fu'
 O' auld harpoons like brissle."

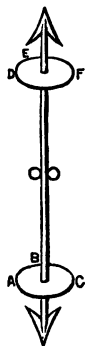
Says John, " If ye would launch the boat
 An' tak' a circle round him,
 We'se gi'e him just a trial yet,
 At onyrate we'll wound him."
 He priggitt sair ere they would start,
 At last a darin' few
 Declared that they would try the job,
 To see what John could do.
 They launched the boat, and John got in—
 The stanchion in his grip—
 And toward the mighty beast they rowed
 A furlong frae the ship.

He saw the boat come rowin' on,
 But didna seem to fear her,
 And as they rowed the sailors seemed
 To like him waur the nearer.
 At fifty yards they leukit roun',
 And made a halt anon,
 But John prevailed wi' them to row
 A little farther on.

Again they cried, " Were far eneuch,
 For if the maggot enters
 The monster's heid, he wouldna stick
 At knockin's a' to splinters."
 John scanned the distance now, and seemed
 About to play the spearer,
 But paused again and said, " Just try
 A little bittie nearer."
 They wudna budge, but seemed inclined
 To mak' the distance greater.
 But here the business was resolved,
 For with a foamin' splatter,
 The monster charged upo' the boat
 Like ocean's wildest billow ;
 It gart the seamen drop their oars,
 And bleached their faces yellow,
 Save John, wha stood up i' the bows
 Undaunted to defeat him,
 And wi' the stanchion in his han'
 He made a spring to meet him.

He sprang into his gaping maw,
 And lichtit on the nether jaw,
 And quick as arrow to its mark,
 He gart his iron stanchion yark
 Doon thro' the jaw wi' suddenty,
 Even to the circle A B C ;
 And stoitin's feet frae lip to lip
 He held it plumb, and leukit up.
 The monster felt the stanchion delvin',
And Arn stampin' on his whalebone,

And gnashed his jaws to gar them shut
 And squelsh him like a halibut,
 But found the morsel wasna brose—
 The upper barb tranfixed his nose,
 Until his palate cam' a "beff"
 Upo' the circle D E F,
 That held against it like a rock,
 And so his jaws were in a lock.



The brute could neither bite nor gape,
 And in his frenzy to escape
 He dived into the deepest sea,
 Head foremost perpendic'larly—
 His usual plan when in a scrape—
 The boatmen ga'e a dismal yell,
 "Now Arn, Arn, fare ye well."

But nae sae fast—in that dread hour
 John grippit to his stanchion sure,

And in the ocean deep and far
 If John was ill the whale was waur—
 His gapin' jaws let in a rush
 That washed his huge æsophagus ;
 And little time sufficed him there,
 He boltit up to get the air,
 And hostit like a deen' cat,
 And John was droukit like a rat,
 But to his stanchion firmly stood,
 Although the waves the monster spewed
 Had near han' washed him wi' their flood.
 But hostin', belchin', groanin', mournin',
 The water wi' his body churnin',
 Now divin' doon and now returnin',
 Sometimes the maddened brute would skim
 A league or upwards at a time,
 While Arn standin' by his stanchion,
 Admired the ocean's wide expansion.
 A' day the seamen frae the ship
 Beheld the wild uproar,
 Tho' miles apart sometimes the spray,
 Fell on them like a shower.
 Amid the vortex o' the brine,
 That foamed and seethed and whis'led,
 Sometimes they saw the gaping maw
 And Arn i' the threshold.

They struggled far and farther off,
 But thro' the telescope
 Afore the set o' sun they saw
 John kynchin' at a rope

Into the stanchion's middle rings—
Walk back within the jaws,
And wi' the rope end in his teeth,
Like ane intent to pass
Athwart an eerie precipice,
They saw him raxin' roun',
The sliddery corners o' the mou',
And grasp an auld harpoon,
And, swingin' like a spider, up
The slippery bastion strain,
And stridin' on the shouthers work
The rope by wye o' rein.
But still his charger plunged and reared
Till darkness closed the scene,
And when the morning dawned, nae mair
O' Arn could be seen.



Part Third.

Now turn we back to Peterheid—
 The sunny afternoon
 Has tempted frae their easy chairs
 Some worthies o' the town.
 They saunter up and doon the Shore,
 On divers thoughts intent ;
 Some thinking on the price o' oil,
 And some o' cent. per cent.

When, lo ! north-eastward o' the sea,
 Anent the Rattrahaid,
 A strange phenomenon is seen
 Come tearin' on wi' speed.
 Now every eye is gazin' there,
 And every gazer wonders ;
 Some thought it was a steamin' ram,
 And roared " Get oot the —— pounders !"
 But little time sufficed to spread
 The tidings through the toon,
 And frae the Broadgate to the Shore
 The crowds cam' pourin' doon.
 And ilk ane had a different say,
 And grievous rumours ran ;
 Ane wi' a powerfu' telescope
 Declared it was a man
 Upo' the " Father o' the Whauls,"
 Careerin', reins in han'.

"Fat ever dreedfu' thing it be,
 We 'll see 't richt shortly here—
 It's drivin' for the northern bar
 As straucht as it can steer."
 "Draw up the brig," the Provost cried,
 "An' lat the road be clear!"

The crowds were jammed like swarmin' bees,
 And but a favoured few,
 Frae pier, or wall, or high-mast head,
 The spectacle could view.
 And aye the nearer that it cam'
 Its aspect stranger grew,
 And for a moment silence fell
 So deep that all could hear
 Beyond the parapets the rush
 Of waters hastening near.

Till from the outer crowd, the cry
 Of "Arn! Arn!" rolled,
 And every eye was o' the bar
 A' gogglin' to behold.
 But when the gapin' monster cam',
 And Arn perchin' like a sparrow,
 The gentle shouted, "Goodness-gracious,"
 And herrin'-fishers, "Deil a marrow."
 But John was liltin' a sang he had sung
 To the Great Mogul on the Ganges,
*"Kilkenny they answered barometer boy
 To the ringbow, O, and the flanges."*
 "Now strik' your fiddles up," he cried,

And crossed the dock frae side to side,
 Unto the draw-brig pass ;
 And ony shippie i' the road,
 Gaed sideways like a bass.
 He stoppit there, but yet it took
 His utmost pull upo' the hook ;
 At last he gart the captive whale
 Lie still ; howbeit his distant tail
 Amo' the water to and fro
 Did work impatiently and slow.

The crowd when their amaze was o'er,
 Set up a wild triumphal roar
 Frae pavement, window, stem and starn,
 "Hurray ! hurray ! for Arn ! Arn !"
 The Provost, mounted on a barrow,
 Cried, "Gweed preserve me, John ! how are ye !"
 Says John, "I thank ye—nae that ill—
 I'm glaid to see ye're weel yersel'."
 And to the greetings wild and wide,
 That poured on him frae ilka side,
 In hame-ower ceevil phrase replied.

Then turnin' Provost-ward, he says,
 "Ye see I've had a sma' success ;
 We cam' across him yesterday
 About the mou' o' Baffin's Bay ;
 I had an awfu' hullibuloo
 Afore I brocht the crettur too ;
He's seen but little o' the skweel,
But now I think he's into reel.

I would hae ta'en him to the ship,
 But fearin' that the time would slip
 For gettin' in my puckle seed,
 I just set on a hameward heid ;
 I'm anxious to get back again,

And would hae hadden on my route,
 But thocht it would be some ill-faur'd
 To nae cry in aboot.

We've travelled at a royal speed,
 A mile for ilka minute gweed,
 Some score degrees o' latiteede.

" Ye was speakin', Provost, o' a tug—
 Now here's a beast would gie a rug
 To ony shippie wantin' oot—
 An' if ye'll chain him by the snout,
 And feed him wi' your fish refuse,
 He might be o' a de'l o' use—
 Your dog and cat fish he'll dispose o',
 He's nae that fractious i' the nose O."

The Provost shook his head and said,
 " I thank ye, John, but I'm afraid
 It wouldna do without yersel' ;
 But if you would come here and dwell,
 Ye'se get a rent-free yard and house,
 A salary and the tuggage dues."
 But John took snuff and answered, " Na,
 I maun gang back to Arnha' ;
 However, that's nae here nor there,
 I hinna langer time to spare—

My road's afore me—fat's the hour ?
 Fa—half-past five—I'll need to scour ;
 I'll be benichtet I suppose,
 Afore I won as far's Montrose."
 Then turnin' half roun' to the larboar',
 He shouted to the ships in harbour,
 " If ony o' ye want a pull
 The wye o' London, Leith, or Hull,
 Lat's see a rope oot o'er your 'sprit,
 I'se tak' ye on the road a bit."
 " All right," a skipper shortly sang,
 " See here's a rope—we'll go alang."
 And John gaed walkin' ben the whale,
 And kynched the rope aboot the tail ;
 When frae the docks anither schooner
 Became a rival for the honour.
 " Aweel if ye're inclined," says Arn,
 " Just heuk yoursel' to this ane's starn ;
 A pair or twenty's a' the same,
 But leuk alive, and lat me hame."

The words had hardly left his lips,
 When other sax or seven ships
 Began to clear their decks wi' glee,
 And get them ready for the sea,
 And John put on a weel-pleased face,
 And gae them twenty minutes' grace ;
 And to the Provost, by the by,
 He clattered in a frien'ly wye
 Aboot the prospects o' the fishin',
 And took a hearty pinch o' sneeshin',

Then gae the ships a final roar,
 "Send a' non-combatants ashore,
 And heuk yoursel's in proper order,
 I'm just aboot to cross the Border."

He shook the Provost's han' wi' ~~seat~~,
 And took his seat upo' the beast,
 And wi' his heel-tops touched him up,
 And shook the reins, and cried, "Gee up,"
 As he were ridin' throu' a park-yett
 Like ony fairmer to the market.
 The powerfu' monster soon replied
 By slowly movin' throu' the tide ;
 The ropes grew strett—the foremost ship
 Did frae her moorings slowly slip ;
 The next was forced to follow on
 Altho' she yielded wi' a groan.

Ship after ship began to jar ;
 By this time John was thro' the bar,
 A-ridin' on wi' cautious cann,
 And keepin' 's tandem well in han'.
 Still as the whale proceeded farther,
 Wi' ilka ship the tug grew harder—
 His dreadfu' fusion seemed but warmin',
 An' for the great occasion barmin' ;
 When fairly oot into the ocean
 His tail put on a screw-like motion.

The people's cheers resounded far,
 As ship and ship gaed thro' the bar ;

Wi' deedly haul their timmers gapin',
 The ropes atween them pleppin'—pleppin'.
 But Arn whiles was lookin' roun'
 To see that a' was workin' soun',
 And when the hin'most ship he saw
 Had cleared the bar, he roared, "Holla !
 Gweed nicht, and joy be wi' you a'."
 And, tho' a man o' modest stuff,
 He fain would hae a sma' show-off.
 So first he took a pinch o' snuff,
 Then, settin's face the wye o' hame,
 Began to kittle up the ste'm.

He shook the slackened reins—his heels
 Administered a thrust,
 And John himsel' put on a hodge
 Impressive and august.
 Refreshed wi' rest the beast careered
 Athwart his ocean home,
 His heckled tail gaed like a wheel,
 And thrashed it into foam.

The labouring vessels pitched and rose,
 And shippit green seas at the bows,
 And lunched and rolled until, along
 Companion-way and scuppers,
 The sailors crawled like crabs, and cursed,
 And vomited their suppers.
 But on they speel'd thro' thick and thin—
 They passed the Buchanness like win'—

At local speed the while was telling,
 And John enthusiastic singing.
 And then came the slow but sure
 A crowd and cheering and hurra.



ARN'S MARRIAGE.

A time had come to John—a time
That comes for great and sma' men,
When they are doomed to tak' a wife.
And say a kind o' A-men.
Whatever w'y it cam' about,
To mairry richt or wrang
Had ta'en possession o' his heid,
And oot it wouldna gang.
He saw the Provost had a wife,
His neebours maistly ane ;
And aften would they banter him,
And ca' him "Burd Alane."

And so in earnest to the wark
He set wi' business plans,
Although he would ha'e rather ta'en
A job to suit the han's.
But this was ane for Heid and Hairt ;
And first the Heid behooved
To tak' a survey and point out
The woman to be loved.
And then the Heid would step aside,
And leave the lonely Hairt
To fa' in love ; he had nae fear
But it would do its pairt.

For several days he balanced things,
 And wrocht by rule o' thoom' ;
 And Arn had his mind made up,
 And boldly faced his doom
 For Peter Brawlie's sister Kate,
 A' in her noon-day bloom.

Now, Peter held a neebourin' tack,
 And was a blameless stock ;
 They war respectable and come
 O' dacent fairmer folk ;
 And Katie keepit house, but now
 A cat had left its pyock.

Some spirit wamlin' in his breist
 Was movin' Peter on
 To mairry Morphie's bonny Jean,
 And even thus for John
 To mairry Kate, and clear the house
 For Peter and his Jean,
 He thocht would be a happy stroke
 In mair respects than ane.

So Katie Brawlie was his choice ;
 A comelier deame than she
 Had never graced a cornyard
 Frae Fordoun to Dundee.

What need we mention it that John
 Declared his love, and wooed, and won.

And here would be the place to tell
 The charms of John's adored,
 But so it is that he himsel'
 Has put them on record.

For first, and so that a' thing micht
 Gae on in proper train ;
 Considerin' that in "love's young dream,"
 A lot o' famous men,
 Frae Solomon to Robbie Burns,
 Had written sangs o' love,
 And gane aboot distrackit-like
 By watter-side or grove !
 He thocht it would be weel for him
 To fashion and write doon
 A sang in Katie Brawlie's praise,
 And set it to a tune.

And for the purpose he had spelled
 And screedit on for hours
 At auld Scots sangs, and eke the lays
 O' ancient troubadours.
 But tho' he thocht it richt to tak'
 A hint or twa frae them,
 The love-sang was his ain device,
 Its music was the same—
 Completely new—nae human mou'
 Had souff'd its bars afore him ;
 Tho' wi' a difference maybe 't had
 A ring o' Tullochgorum.

But thro' the love-sang task he tried
 At-orra times to creep ;
 And first he soared sublimely up,
 "O, love is daft and deep"—
 And then he tried a lullaby—
 "Sleep, Katie Brawlie, sleep."

It wouldna do ; he full'd his mull,
 And then adjourned to scan
 For some romantic spot to suit
 The job he had in han'.

There was a lounsome dell, and there
 A rocky bluff where Arn
 Across the knowes could spy the reef
 O' Peter Brawlie's barn,
 But first within the bonny howe
 He dandered for a time,
 And racked his heid and scratched his heid
 For reason and for rhyme.

And i' the deid-thraw o' the wark
 He climbed the bluff aboon,
 And now and than he leukit owre
 To Peter Brawlie's toun.

And wi' his han' upon his hairt
 While standin' on the bluff,
 Wi' aye the ither lusty sigh,
 The ither pinch o' snuff,

The inspiration cam' afresh,
 And aye the ither line,
 Until he had his sang o' love
 Completed to his min'.

By this—'twas past his dinner time,
 And startin' wi' a bang,
 He took his brose in haste and then
 Sat down and wrote the sang.

JOHN'S LOVE SONG.

"O, Katie Brawlie's my delicht,
 Or wull be by an' bye ;
 I think upon her day and nicht,
 At onyrate I try.
 The laverocks sing abeen her heid
 For love o' Katie Brawlie ;
 She shortly sorts the cats wi' clods
 When they get cauterwaulie.

"I wat it sets her weel to trip
 The licht fantastic tae ;
 She clears her road throu' thick and thin,
 An' lats them say their say.
 An' aye as she gaes throu' the reel
 Her dandy ribbons flee—
 Her legs are like an elephant's,
 And dark blue is her e'e.

"It sets her weel to sing a sang
 Would rend your hairt, and O!
 To cairry to the giral laft
 A bow o' meal also.
 A pun' o' sweeties for her mou',
 And barley rock I'll buy,
 And meet her when the kye come hame—
 Her brither Peter's kye."

But now for John the hour has come,
 And he the plank maun stride;
 His sang is sung, and love's young dream,
 Has had its time and tide.
 Three different Sundays he has been
 In marriage purpose cried
 With "Katharine Bravely"; so did the
 Precentor style the bride.

And Lady Katharine in her bower
 A' in her bridal tire
 Is buskit like the Queen o' Hairts,
 And blushin' like a fire.
 And Peter grat for vera joy,
 And utter stuff did blether,
 To think he would hae sic a man
 As John for a gweed-brither.

There's pots and goglets o' the fire
 And ovens i' the fleer;
 Wi' bleezin' anxious faces on
 The cooks are in a steer;

And mony a choice and goodly hen
 Is simmerin' in her bree ;
 A savoury odour frae the lums
 Is wafted to the lee.

And a' the road frae cot or ha'
 The flags were up for John ;
 Montrose had in its hundreds come
 To cheer the hero on.
 But John was lookin' raither glum
 For a' the wild ovation—
 He thocht he had been in a mair
 Heroic situation.
 A beaver hat was on the heid
 Whase brains were matched by nane,
 A reid plush waistcoat on the breist
 Where fear had never been,
 And mairrage glives upo' the nivvs
 That valiant deeds had deen.

In Peter Brawlie's room o' state
 A company sae braw
 Had never met as on that day—
 The Provost there and a' ;
 And wha to tak' a bride frae thence
 But John o' Arnha'.

And when he cam', they shook his han'
 Wi' hairy greetin's roun ;
 But John was leukin' unco wull
 And on a form sat down,

And crossed his legs and clasped his han's,
 And leukit on the floor ;
 The form was covered wi' a sheet
 And stood ahint the door ;
 And they that kent him best were sure
 There was a something wrang—
 They 'd never seen him wi' a face
 Sae sairious and lang.

But signs and sounds betokened now
 The crash o' the romance—
 A rustlin' and a bustlin' heard
 O' bridesmaids i' the trance.

And then the door that had been shut
 Upon its hinges veered,
 And Peter wi' his sister linked
 In bridal pomp appeared.

'Twas hard to say if Peter led,
 Or trailed ahint the bride ;
 But John was up and found himsel'
 Wi' Katie at his side ;
 The minister was in his front—
 And naething for 't but "slide."

And now—the minister himsel'
 In view o' John's renown
 Had thocht that nae sic case again
 Would in his power be thrown.

And frae the day he had been asked
 His office to fulfil,
 Had ower a special service yearned,
 And laboured wi' a will ;
 And a' prepared for days, he had
 Like lemonade been fizzin' ;
 And to the great occasion now
 He fairly had arisen.

His hearers marked an extra lick
 O' unction in his tone—
 He spak' o' love and married bliss
 In Adam's time and on ;
 And a' the statutes thereanent
 He screedit aff to John.
 He warmed, and for the case in hand
 Laid lang exhortings down.
 It was a service by itsel',
 And new—like Arn's tune,
 But mainly for its ponderous length
 Remarkable, for he
 For matrimonial purposes
 Had purposed it to be
 A Body o' Divinity,
 Four-square, that nothing feared—
 An orthodox and standard wark
 Westminster might hae reared.

And wi' his ain grandiloquence
 Engrossed, he didna see
 That Arn groaned in spirit aye
 And grumphed uncannily.

Frae authors sacred and profane
 He quoted strains sublime,
 And even frae heathen classickers
 A clincher at a time—
 The Greek original at first,
 And then in English rhyme.

At length he had arrived at where
 With due solemnity
 He asked the bridegroom if he took
 His wedded wife to be
 The woman standing by his side—
 And then there was a pause ;
 And then—"Guid faith, I kenna, man,"
 Escaped frae Arn's jaws.

There was anither awkward lull,
 And nane to whisper dared ;
 And Arn tappin' on his mull,
 And takin' snuff was heard.
 And when he spak' again it was
 Like ane resolved in sooth
 To tell the truth, and a' the truth,
 And naething but the truth.

"Now, minister, for you ye ken
 I have a strong respec',
 But troth, in a concern like this
 We maun be circumspec' ;
 And I would like my bargain sure,
 For fear I play the martyr ;
 I've heard the mistress o' the manse
 Is something o' a Tartar.

- “ Ye ’ve yarned on, but what aboot,
 This hour, or near-han’ bye,
 Ye maybe hae a guess yoursel’,
 But deil a ken ken I ;
 Aboot neglectin’ a’thing else,
 An’ cleavin’ to a wife—
 The sweetness o’ the mairrage tie—
 An’ cherishin’ for life,
 An’ flesh o’ flesh, and bane o’ bane,
 An’ nae mair twa, but only ane ;
 An’ things o’ whilk I ’ve little skeel—
 Affection, love, and sic traleel ;
 But I would like a word or twa
 On common-sense concerns,
 That ane can get a grip o’ like,
 An’ compass wi’ the harns.
- “ And oot o’ sundry things on whilk
 I had a word to say—
 There’s wark adee aboot a place
 Frae Yeel to Hogmanay ;
 An’, faith, the wife maun tak’ her share—
 Affection here, affection there—
 Although it war for naething but
 To keep her in a fix
 Frae workin’ Satan’s orra wark,
 An’ a’ mischeevous tricks.
- “ So i’ the mornin’, to commence,
 Excep’ on Sunday mornin’,
 She maun be up by sax o’clock,
 An’ set the fire a-burnin’ ;

An' then gae oot and milk the kye,
 An' see an' milk them clean ;
 An' boil the kettle for my brose,
 An' brush an' bleck the sheen.

"She'll hae to brew, an' wash the claes,
 An' bake upo' the bakin' days ;
 There's churnin' tee an' a' that ilk,
 An' yearnin' when there's fouth o' milk.
 She'll hae to tak' in chairge the hens,
 An' min' her household odds and ends,
 An' a' the lesser jots o' wark—
 Sic-like's the buttons o' my sark.

"But mair than this—I've been informed
 About the female tongue,
 That it maun wag whatever wag,
 And sing tho' a' be sung.
 I've heard them chirpin' on mysel',
 And sometimes thocht it funny ;
 But tho' I kentna what was said
 I thocht that a' was honey.

"I wat 'twas cheery like to hear
 The bonny craiturs gab.
 The mair's the pity, but I doubt
 Their little tongues can stab.
 And ower their cups o' tea, when they
 Begin to buzz an' bum,
 They say they're sure to brew a cup
 O' bitter ale for some.

A body that was ignorant
 Would hardly hae belief
 O' how they 'll twist an' twine at things
 To kittle up mischief.

“ And so, afore I'm tackled wi'er,
 I want to mention now and here,
 And gie her warnin' ance for a'
 That the guidwife o' Arnha'
 Is nae to mingle in sic strifes,
 Or yaumer wi' the neebourin' wives ;
 The tae day chirrpin' as if
 Sic freends were never born,
 An' then at cat-an-dogger strife
 Than ever o' the morn.

“ I've gaithered knowledge tee in some
 Additional respec's,
 That dressy notions full the heids
 O' a' the fairer sex.
 And nae the handsome only,
 But the ugly and the auld
 Think mair o' claes for leukin' braw
 Than keepin' oot the cauld.

“ Wi' kaims an' gumflowers i' their hair,
 An' targatings below
 O' frills an' flounces, heuks an' eyes,
 They like to mak' a show ;
 An' leuk like angels if they can,
 And what for should they no ?

- “ But we’ll be yokit middlin’ weel
 In this respect o’ claes,
 For so it cam’ aboot wi’ me
 That i’ my younger days
 I took some turns thro’ foreign pairts,
 And noo and than frae there
 I brocht a sma’ collection hame
 O’ miscellaneous ware.
 They’re lyin’ i’ the orra barn
 In rouch-an’-richtish style,
 But still I think there’s several things
 Her fancy would beguile.
- “ There’s fine brocades, an’ claith o’ gowd,
 An’ Cashmere silks an’ shawls ;
 An’ Persian slippers for the feet,
 An’ Cheena faldre-lals.
 And there there’s toggerie that decked
 The Incas o’ Peru,
 The gartens o’ Kum Reeriki,
 The Queen o’ Chickaboo.
- “ There’s siller plate o’ different kinds,
 Like servers, cups, an’ speens ;
 There’s crouns an’ coronets I’ve won
 Frae foreign kings and queens,
 Wi’ filagrees an’ warks o’ airt
 In gowd and precious stanes.
- “ And then there’s horns o’ buffalo,
 Koodoos or unicorns,
 Doun to the daintiest antelope’s—
 I wat there’s fouth o’ horns.

"There's ostrich plumes an' tortoiseshell
 To mak' her heid sae braw—
 There's skins an' furs to keep her warm
 When winter tempests blaw,
 O' tiggers, sealchs, or polar bears
 As white's the driven snaw.

"There's rings and jewels for the lugs,
 As weel's the nose or lip,
 Besides a birn o' Indian scalps
 Frae yont the Mississip.

"She's free to pick an' deck hersel'
 Wi' a' the toggerie she can trail
 O' silks, an' furs, an' beadwark, doun
 Frae feathered heid wi' glitterin' croun
 To feet adorned wi' Persian sheen,
 An' sail aboot like ony queen ;
 Wi' horns upon her heid an' a'
 She'll gar the neebour wives leuk sma',
 An' launch at her their wicket blatter,
 An' gnash their teeth wi' envy at her.

"O' women lik'wise I've been tauld
 That they're a balm for woe,
 But then in that partic'lar line
 I've little case to show."

And here it was that Arn paused,
 And made anither lull ;
 And i' the meantime he took snuff,
 And pouched his sneeshin'-mull.

And wi' his pocket-nepkin then
 He dustit at his nose ;
 But by the w'y he humphed they kent
 He wasna at a close.

His left hand i' the oxter o'
 His waistcoat was enthoombed—
 His richt hand reistit on his hinch,
 As John his speech resumed.

“Howbeit I'm gi'en to understan'
 Since I took this concern in han',
 That women's w'ys afar or near,
 To say the least are raither queer ;
 Ye canna count on what they'll dee,
 An' that they're thrawn till a degree ;
 I've heard that ilka noo an' than
 They maun kick up a shandy-dan,
 An' rage wi' reason unco sma',
 Or vera likely nane ava.

“If I had kent a twalmonth seen
 I think I'd latt'n weel alane.
 Howbeit my passion's been declared,
 And I may say that I'm prepared
 For some sic visitation wi' 'er,
 But nae exceedin' twice a year.
 I'se jouk an' lat the jaw gae bye,
 If better canna be,
 An' lat her kick an' tak' her fling
 To ony safe degree.

" And like a catawampus' den
 Mak' Arnha' baith but an' ben ;
 And bang the cheirs an' steels aboot,
 An' murder peace baith in an' oot ;
 An' mak' wi' ilka pot an' pan]
 As muckle deevlitch din's she can ;
 An' rake up a' the spitefu' lees,
 An' onything that disagrees,
 An' wi' a tongue would clip a clout
 Gang on until she tire
 O' chirpin' spite an' venom oot,
 An' spittin' liquid fire.

" And if it's to dee ony gweed,
 Or help her tantrum till a heid,
 To ply her han's as well's her tongue
 When i' the blusters o' her bung,
 I'se mak' her welcome when the tongue
 Has a' its venom harpit,
 To buff me like a feather bed,
 And dust me like a carpet.

" To ding, or even, to kick an' scratch,
 If that should help to please the wratch ;
 She'll get her wull wi' hivvs or fangs,
 But, faith, I wunna stan' the tyangs ;
 There comes wi' a'thing o' the kin'
 A stage whaur we maun draw the line.

" But when that this has had its roun',
 There needs maun be a cheenge o' tune ;

In twa-three days—we sanna stick
 To ony iron rule—
 But at the utmost, say, a week,
 And then she'll hae to cool.
 An' tak a thocht, and set hersel'
 Her hummel pie to sup,
 An' gaither up her broken bowls,
 An' mak' a fresh redd-up.
 An' wash her face, an' snod hersel',
 An' keep within her pow
 A freely smoothen tongue than what
 She had afore the row.

“For if my patience chanced to fail
 I nicht tak' on a tigg mysel',
 An' gie her something in return,
 Sic-like's a sweelin' i' the burn ;
 If that should happen aboot Yeel,
 Wi' shills o' ice upo' the peel,
 A twa-three turns 'll cool her coppers,
 An' gar her exercise her flappers
 In different fashion for a wee,
 Than scartin' and abusin' me.

“However, things may never come
 To sic an awkward bearin'—
 At ony rate we'll live in hope,
 An' nae be ower despairin'.

“There's ither things that I would like
 To han'le for a wee ;

But if we hae as muckle luck
 As happen to agree
 Upo' the twa-three major points
 I've said a word upon,
 I think as for the lesser jots
 We'll manage to get on.

"But there's the lassie here hersel'—
 Its mainly her concern—
 She's heard my ain partic'lar views
 As weel's your marriage yarn.

"Now, Katie, say yersel', have ye
 Objections great or sma'
 To mairry me—for better or
 For waur—for gweed an' a'."
 And Katie, wi' her blithest smile,
 Responded, "Nane ava."

But a' the time that John had thus
 His mairrage views expounded,
 The luckless minister had sat
 Within a chair confounded;
 And aye as John gaed on the sweat
 Ran down his reverend face,
 But when he heard the bride's response
 He gaithered hairt o' grace;
 And startit up and in a word
 Declared them man and wife,
 And shakin' han's he wished them baith
 A lang and happy life.

We'll nae discuss the feast again—
 It was discussed I trow—
 And o'er the royal bowls o' punch
 We mayna linger now ;
 The sun was low, and a' the west
 Was in a gowden lowe ;

When flags were waved, and cannon roared—
 The people's loud acclaim
 Announced the coach was at the door
 That was to bear them hame ;
 And leave them to the doubtful doom
 O' married human-kind.
 Nae flimsy curricie was that,
 Wi' velvet cushions lined—
 It was a cairt that John had made
 Upon a new design,
 And surnamed it an omnibus,
 And painted it a sign.

And in the shafts in solemn pomp,
 And garnished fore and aft,
 Was the rhinoceros that wrocht
 The horse-wark o' his craft.
 Wi' flowers his corrugated hide
 Was garlanded aboot,
 An orange-blossom collar decked
 His heid and horned snout.
 And frae his polished harness hung
 The ribbons brushed the grun',
 The reins wi' Day and Martin's bleck
 Were flashin' to the sun.

The cairt had springs, an' cam' a' speed
 Surpassin' a'thing roun' ;
 And secks were stuffed wi' caff whereon
 The happy pair sat down.

But when that this was done the beast
 Would neither haud nor bin',
 And at the start the people scoured
 Like caff afore the win'.
 But beesoms volleyed i' their train,
 An' auld an' aulder sheen,
 Wi' mony a prayer for happiness
 On Arn and his queen.

The beast was snortin' as he ran,
 And stretchin' in his stride ;
 The cairt was hotterin' wi' the speed,
 And Arn and his bride.
 For weel did the rhinoceros ken
 That porter in a puncheon.
 And trycl'd bran was in his sta',
 By w'y o' mairrage luncheon.

And blithe was Katie Brawlie's face,
 And blither yet anon,
 As wi' the bumpin' o' the cairt
 She cannoned upo' John.
 And on they crashed to Arnha',
 But then o' what befel
 Anither chronicle may hae
 Anither tale to tell

RHYME OF ST. DROSTAN'S EVE:

A LEGEND OF DEER AND ESSLEMONT.

YE RIME.

Futte II.

Ye Abbotte of Deir is a fatte Abbotte
At Christmasse or Lenten tide,
And the fatte & the cream of ye Howes o' Deir
He puts in nae evill hyde.
The braid sirloin to hys table comes
At the Abbey's banquet hour,
Wi' venison pastie or wild boar's cheeke
Fra the forests o' eld Pitfour.
The banquet is near when ye Curfew bell
Is tauld for the parting daye,
Hys flagone is filled with ye rede, rede wine
Fra vaults o' the dark Abbaye.

But Essilmont sits in his fortalice,
That is fendyt wi' fosse & barre—
Nae fatnesse hath he although rank of bane—
Ane wolfe-like man of warre.
It is Lent wi' hym when it sould na be,
It is Fast when a Feast sould hauld,
Tho' at Yule or Pasche he may whet his teeth
On a stirk fra the cattill-fauld ;

Or ane cow he hath reived fra the helpless puir,
 Unheedin' their dulefu' plaine—
 Wi' game on hys table—the yern-bleteére,
 Or the heron that haunts ye fen.

And Essilmont sits in his highe towere,
 And the rede wine drinketh he ;
 He had come that daye fra St. Drostane's fair,
 By the eld toun o' Deir that be.
 He had seen ye Abbotte, wi' mickle pomp,
 Gae past him wi' Friars three.
 Ye Abbotte, wi' mitre, & crosse, & gown,
 Was lustie & fair to see.
 For fatte & sleeke was hys shaven cheeke,
 And the rowe o' hys malmy e'e
 Nae seemed to leuk on ye things' dark side,
 But to guid things that sall be.
 The knycht took scance o' hys ain lene hand,
 And hys framewark o' skin & bane,
 And the cloud on hys wrinklitt brow grew mirk—
 The licht in hys erneste eyen.

The wintry winds that had hushed awhile
 Howled out richt eerilié,
 For Essilmont voweth ane deidlie vow
 That ye Abbotte o' Deir sall dee.

Ane word & ane blowe wi' Essilmont—
 Nae waveryn mind he held,
 But he beltit hys great twa-handit sworde,
 And hys murderous gear of eld.

He hath buckled hys steede i' the graith hymself —
 Hys steede o' the bluide & bane—
 And left i' the grim Decembre nicht—
 But spoken a word to nane ;
 And hys "Ave Mary" the watchman sayd,
 As he stoode by the gate alane.

But Essilmont breisteth the Ellon furde,
 And rideth the road to Deir,
 By the Mercat Hill & the great black moss,
 And the Bishop's Byrness mere.

And aye & on to the darksome hills,
 And the marshes o' Argantee,
 Of the whilk a rhyme of the Rhymer tells
 That ye Deil in a crafte sall be—
 He gallops the lounsone bridle-track
 Where the whurrin' muirfoul flee.

Hys steede reared up at Ald Malyn furde,
 Sa black i' the winter dreare—
 But Essilmont ran to hys banes the spur,
 And they plunged to the saddle-gear ;
 For he thocht on the vow he had vowed that nicht,
 And ye fatte Abbottes o' Deir.

He scoureth ye flintie Skelmuir hills,
 And their norland bogs & knowes,
 Till hys horse's heels gied a safter dunt
 I' the fertile Ugie howes.

But hys steede again on the haugh reeled back,
And the knyght fra the saddle stared,
For the monks were keepin' St. Drostane's Feast,
And the Abbey windows glared.
He heard fra cloister & inner vault
The hum o' their revelrie.
He hath led hys steede into dark foreste,
And tied him to alder tree.



Futte II.

Ye Abbottle hath keepit St. Drostan's Feast,
 And lyeth ye floore upon
 In ane thorough sleep, & his hand that is fatte
 Yet claspeth the wyne-flagone.

And beside him—wha seems na to think it strange—
 Ane Friar lene & grim ;
 He proppeth the Abbottle hys heid at times,
 And he reideth St. Drostan's hymne.

There is ane cowl on that Friar's heid
 That flappeth hys face sae grim,
 And ane missal-buik in hys scranky hand,
 And he reideth St. Drostan's hymne.

He heareth the sang o' ye merrie Monks,
 And the wind in the cloisters dim,
 And the Abbottle's breath—an solemn snore—
 But he reideth St. Drostan's hymne.

But his eyen took anither & sudden leuk
 As he heard ane graceless heel,
 And the joyaunce die in the corridors
 To the clank o' unhaly steele ;
 And the giant spectre o' Essilmont
 Appeared for their wae or weel.

He leukit nae lang on the lene Friar,
 Wha faced hym wi' angry glance,
 But doun on ye Abbottle wha lay between
 He leukit like ane in trance.

"Rash trouper, aroint ye!" the Friar said,
 "I charge that ye silence keep—
 What seekest thou here? Depart, nor break
 The Abbottle hys haly sleep."
 "Fear not, O Friar," said Essilmont,
 "I will give it him lang & deip."

"I know thee, the fierce Schyr Henry Chene—
 There be little of jest with ye—
 But I charge that ye tell me," the Friar said,
 "If ane cause for sic feud there be ;"
 And the knycht wha saw but ye Abbottle said,
 "He is fatter than I may be."

"Yet hear me now," said the lene Friar,
 "Bethink thee, & hauld thy hand—
 Perchance it may be in thy tower afar
 That thou hast na at due command,
 When thou hauldest feast on the days of Feast,
 The cheer that sould duly be—
 The venison haunch or the fatte muttone,
 The sack or the Burgundie.
 Yet gae in peace to your tower & bid
 That the cellars & larder there
 Be ready made for ane guidlie store
 Of victualls & vintage rare.

And ere the set of the morn's sun
 There sall follow by mersk & mere
 A train wi' the malmsy wyne laden,
 And the best o' the Howes o' Deir."

And now on the Friar did Essilmont leuk,
 And waveryt in felle design
 As he thocht o' a nicht in hys dreary tower
 Wi' a butt o' the malmsy wyne.
 But he leukit again on ye fatte Abbotte
 Engrossyt & bent him low
 Wi' ane hand on the lustie shouldere laid,
 And he turned to hys deidlie vowe.

Ye Friare hath lyftit hys crosse on high—
 There was licht in hys corpe-like eyen—
 But Essilmont saw but ye fatte Abbotte
 Wha snocheryt them betweene.

"Thou art bent on ane evill & bluidy deed,
 But I rede ye that ye beware!
 If ye ruffle ane fauld o' the Abbotte's robe
 Or hurt o' hys heid ane hair,
 The banne o' the kirk sall be hurlit on ye,
 The Paip fra hys cheir sall rise—
 And blast thy saul wi' ane brimstane curse
 Fra the entrance o' paradise.
 And a thousand priests for a thousand year,
 Wi' candil, & buik, & bell,
 Sall curse ye by altar & even here
 Whare ye stand in your purpose felle."

Again on the Friar did Essilmont leuk,
 As he thocht on a thousand yeir,
 And the weicht o' the weird anathema,
 And the Paip in St. Peter's cheir,
 And he nicht hae shrunk but he leukt again
 On ye fatte Abbotte o' Deir
 Wha wallowit then in his grosse fatnesse,
 And the Friar was stricken dumb,
 For he saw by the gnashin' o' Essilmont's teeth.
 That ye Abbotte hys time had come.

He hath grippit ye Abbotte the waist around,
 And hauled him wi' giant power—
 He harlyt him lang & desperately
 To the tap o' ye Abbey tower.
 And the Friar lene, & for ilka stane
 And step o' the wynding stair,
 He uttered ane fearfule malisoune
 That cost the knycht nae care.

He hath hurlit ye Abbotte fra parapet,
 And they stooode them as stark as death,
 Till they heard ane heavy & dismal thudde
 I' the meadow sa deep anethe.

Ane fiery flaucht fra the Aikey brae
 Gaed flappin' the lift along—
 The nicht was cleft wi' the bleeze, their eyen
 Were dazed i' the glamour strang.
 But they saw fra the eerie parapet
 Ye greene wood swaird upon,

Ye Abbottes wha keepit St Drostan's sleep,
 And beside him his wyne flagone.
 Anon i' the mirk midnight they heard
 A cry fra the foreste dreare—
 'Twas the nicher o' Essilmont's lancesome steed
 As he shiverit in ghaistly feare.

"I banne thee—banne thee," the Friar said,
 "To lie in ane blasted grave"—
 "And thou," said the knyght, "with ye Abbottes
 sould lie,

If ye were but as fatte as brave.
 But fear ye nae by his leefu' lane,
 That ye Abbottes his doome sall dree,—
 The fattest Monk fra your Abbey cells
 Sall keep him in companie."

He hath gane fra high tower, Essilmont ;
 (The lene Friar hath gane)
 He paced i' the Abbey aisles, but he heard
 Nae voice, he met wi' nane.
 Till he enterit ane vaulted door & saw
 Sae silentlie set alang
 Ane score or mair o' goodlie monks
 Wi' faces douse & lang,
 And like ane wolfe in fauld he stood
 Ye peacefulle Monks amang.

He bade them to rise, & the Monks uprase ;
 He bade them to stand in line,
 And they stood in line save ye Friar Whang
 Sa heavie wi' beefe & wyne.

But they held him up wha him stooode besyde,
 And the Friars stood in line,
 Wi' ane wistfulle leuk on the lene Friar,
 But he ga nae word or sign.

But Essilmont leukt on ye Friars,
 And ponderyt them between—
 There was mony a lustie Friar there
 That leukit wi' earnest eyen.

He leukt awhile on ye Friar Whang,
 And passyt the line alang,
 And he spak nae word but he stood again
 And leukt on ye Friar Whang.

He hath passyt them ance, he hath passyt them twice
 Ahint them & then afore,
 And aye as he pass't by the Friar Whang
 He haltit & scannyt him ower.

He strideth again with ane judgment stride,
 And aye as he scannyt them ower
 Themselfs they drew in sa weel as they micht
 Fra ahint them, or fra afore.

But the Friar Whang nae drew in himsel'
 As he bendyt sae heavilie—
 Wi' ane Monk wha upheld him on ilka side,
 He was lustie & stoutte to see—
 He was na giant like Essilmont,
 But his weicht was ye weicht o' three.

He haltit again by ye Friar Whang,
 And scannyt him ower & ower—
 He hath gripp't him wi' vengeance ye waist around
 And harlyt wi' giant power—
 He harlyt him lang & desperately
 To the tap o' ye Abbey tower.

He was gaspin' hard & ane angrie man
 At the weicht o' ye Friar Whang,
 And his corpe when he cam to parapet
 Wi' little revere he flang.
 He drew ane deip & thankfulle breath
 As he heard ye Friar fa' ;
 He hath come fra high tower & turned
 Fra the Abbey o' Deir awa'—
 The Monks were tellin' their beads wi' zeal,
 And they tauld them till matin daw.

But there followit furth ye lene Friar,
 Wha Essilmont banned & banned—
 But he spak nae ill to the lene Friar
 Nor liftet to him ane hand.
 Hys steede that nichered in dark foreste
 He led wi' ane weary hand,
 And mountit him out on ye open haugh,
 And raid & the Friar banned.

But down the howe as he raid afar
 The Friar's voice grew dim ;
 But he banned & when Essilmont heard nae mair
 He turned to St. Drostan's hymne.

And the knycht raid on to his tower again,
But aye as the yeirs roun' ran,
He could hear i' the sough o' St. Drostan's Eve
Ye Friar hys eerie banne—
And ane dismal thudde i' the mirk midnight—
And he grew nae fattyr ane man.



Futte HH.

THE MAID OF DEIR.

Ye Abbottle was slain, & the yeirs ran on,
 Till a Maiden fra Deir there came ;
 She had prayed on her knee fra Essilmont
 For the gift o' a hermit hame.

She had prayed for the deid Black Sisters' cot
 Beside the auld chapélle,
 Where never a saul would cross, & she
 To the tempest her beads nicht tell.

They said she was fair, they said she was fause,
 But Essilmont—nane but he
 When he granted her prayer had beheld her face,
 But they said it was fair to see—
 They had seen but her form on the sad sky line
 That at eventide nicht be.

They said she had vowed his death for that she
 Had ye Abbottle's ain chylde been—
 She would lure him to a midnight weird
 Wi' glamourie o' her eyen—
 But aye he had gane to the wars & come,
 Nor heeded the lone Maidéne.

St. Drostane's Day had been wild & wae
 Fra morn to early e'en—
 St. Drostane's Eve was ane eerie nicht
 As ever had Essilmont seen.
 Ane casement glimmered i' the tower,
 Where sat the knycht alane ;
 Nae man had spoken to him that day--
 He had spoken a word to nane.

And roun' by fire as they sat in ha'
 There was fear on his ruthless men,
 For that had been ever a dowie nicht
 Since the Abbottle o' Deir was slain,
 Ane death-licht had been seen at dusk
 On the Bourhills movin' slaw--
 And ane arrow was deftly shot that night,
 As they sat by fire in ha',
 It had entered the casement fra the north,
 And it stuck i' the farther wa'.

And doun fra the arrow there hung ane scrowe,
 And they never a word could read ;
 But they likyt it ill, & they likyt it waur,
 For the letters were written in bluid.

They climbed the tower to Essilmont,
 But they stood at his chamber door ;
 For they saw that he sat in ane heavy sleep,
 But girded in full armoure.
 Perchance he had thocht on St. Drostane's Eve,
 And ye fatte Abbottle o' Deir ;

And sae when encased in his heaviest mail,
 And his wappins o' war anear,
 He had gane to sleep on St. Drostan's Eve
 Wi' little o' care or fear.

Nae better a licht had he kent fra youth
 'Gainst evils that nicht befalle—
 Nae trust but in steel & in armoure strong,
 Fra danger to flesh or saul.

They woke him & gae him their dismal tale,
 And the scrowe that was written in bluid ;
 And he leukt on it lang & did turn it around
 Tho' he never a word could read.

But he scannyt it lang & wistfullie—

Ye scrowe that was written in bluid—

There were nane wha could help him there, but
 they said

That the Maiden o' Deir nicht read.

"Now get me the Maiden o' Deir," he said,

And they turned them about to ride ;

But even then wi' the cross on her breist

The Maiden stood them besyde—

Wi' never a mantle nor hood on her face,
 And fairer than eastern bryde.

Had she entered the Castle by felle glamoure ?

Tho' they saw they could ill believe,

For the gate had been barred & the draw brig
 drawn,

All on St. Drostan's Eve.

But Essilmont leukt on the Maiden there,
 And prayed her ye scrowe to read ;
 And she read in their midst ye mystic words,
 That fell on their hearts like lede :—

“ Ye murderit Abbottle his greeting sends

To the brave Schyr Henry Chene—

Will ye follow the burn fra your Castle wa’

Ane bow-shot on & ane ?

Will ye on to the dark howe, Essilmont,

And fecht me alane, alane ? ”

He bade her to read ye scrowe ance mair,
 And the Maiden read loud & clear,
 And said, as she looked in his face sa brave,
 “ Will ye daunt on the Ghost o’ Deir ? ”

He turned to the wall where his wappins hang,

And scanned them wi’ trustfulle eyen ;

He felt for ane edge that was fierce & true,

And handlit them ane by ane.

There were some wha did leuk in his grim face then

For the token o’ doubt or drede—

But he lenkit like Smyth wha his tools doth grip

For to earn his daily brede.

He hath chosen ane mace that had smitten the faes

O’ his sires that were deid & gane—

Ane mace fra the times o’ the Norsemen wars

That had shattered the skulls of men.

He is down to the gate, he hath crossed the brig,

And the warder stood wan wi’ fear—

For saft as a shadow & close ahint

There followed the Maid of Deir.

Part Second.

There were nane wha did follow besides that nicht—

He had bidden that nane sould come—

But they stood to watch fra the Castle wa',

And sairly they feared his doom.

There were evil lights i' the eerie Howe,

That swam on the earth sa slaw ;

There was evil laughter fra yont the lights

Fra fiends that they never saw.

But they saw mid the rushes ye Abbote's Ghost,

In shape it were sin to tell,

O' gruesome fatnesse & gore, as when doun

Fra the Abbey o' Deir he fell ;

And up the burn, wi' ane awsome glowere,

He stood i' the flauchts o' hell.

They could see on the dark path Essilmont,

As he hasted the Ghost anear,

He was half i' the rede licht, & half in glume,

And ahint him the Maid of Deir.

He closed with ye spectre of fatte Abbote,

And the Maiden's laugh rang clear,

And the flauchts on his deidly mace spat fire,

As he smote at the felle Specteère.

It lifted ane hande wi' the wyne flagone,

And for Essilmont seemed to glaum,

And ye never would ken it had brook't ane blow,

It leukit sa fatte & calm.

Sae hard they foucht, sa lang they foucht,
 That back & back they bore ;
 The knycht did smite wi' glaive & mace,
 And aye the Ghost did glower,
 And the Maiden did curse at Essilmont,
 And mock at his vain devoir.

He smote the Ghost till his strength was spent,
 But it gogglit wi' constant glare,
 And aye tho' he maced it thro' teeth & chin,
 He seemed but to fecht wi' air.
 He fell, & Alas ! for the Maiden then,
 She mocked as the turf he tare—
 “ O Essilmont, i' the spirit war,
 Is it evil or weel ye fare ? ”
 They could see him rise fra the gruesome mire,
 And his furious taunt could hear,
 On the legions o' hell to defend her then,
 As he rushed at the Maid of Deir.

The evil lights like a spark were snuffed,
 And the watchers could nocht descry,
 But up fra the eerie Howe there cam'
 Ane wild & bitter cry !
 And aye they watched but the nicht grew mirk
 And the winter winds gaed bye.

They gathered roun' by fire in ha',
 Richt little did they say ;
 They wouldna venture down the burn
 Till dawnin' o' the day.

But heavy steps they heard ere lang
 Thro' door & ha' come ben—
 'Twas Essilmont in fiery haste—
 They had held him deid & gane.

His richt hand gript his mace, his left
 Ane awsome burthen bore—
 O Mercy ! 'twas the Maiden's heid
 He flang upo' the floor.

He sat him down wi' gasps for breath
 That shook his iron frame,
 But a' for that sae hard he blew
 He seemed wi' rage to faem,
 And lang he sat in wrath & dule
 Until his breath cam' slaw,
 And ever fra his whitened face
 The bitter draps did fa'.

A' round the dismal vault his men
 In evil case stood bye,
 For on the floor the Maiden's heid
 Into their midst did lye.
 And down the eerie Howe her form
 Sa comely to be seen—
 But had it gane to the far countrie—
 The ghost o' the lone Maidéne ?
 Her cheek was o' the cauld flag-stane,
 Wan-lichtit by the flame,
 And o'er the stanes the Maiden's hair
 She never mair would kaim.

The tresses o'er her face were flung,
 The glitter in her e'e
 Had never passed, & on the knycht
 She leukit waefullie—
 He seemed to gie the leuk again,
 But he glared on vacancie.

But to his cheek the flush returned,
 And to his eyen the fire—
 They wotna that the winds had sunk
 Till peals of laughter dire
 Cam' up the burn, but laigh at first—
 Ane goblin-like guffaw—
 But waxing like a mighty wind,
 When trees in forest fa',
 Until it entered at the door,
 And rang thro' tower & ha'.

He rose again wi' grinding teeth
 To seek his deidly fae,
 And at his feet the Maiden's face
 Beheld him wan & wae.
 O weel if he had shivered then,
 And claspt the Haly Ruid !
 But his failing hand ave gript the mace
 A' daggled wi' her bluid.

O mickle wist they he had ta'en
 That dark heid fra the floor,
 St. Mary save us ! for it turned
 And watched him to the door.

But little kent he then or cared
 For slaughtered Maiden's eyen—
 He passed the gate & crossed the brig
 And took the nicht alane.

They watched again fra Castle wa'—
 Nae death-licht shed its lowe,
 But thrice the evil laughter yet
 Did nicher fra the Howe.
 The third & last, sae far & lang,
 Fra river ran & brae,
 And withered like the mainin' soun'
 O' waves in Harkla bay—
 And to his tower cam' Essilmont
 Fra dark Howe never mae.

The Maiden's heid where first it fell
 Was left upo' the stane ;
 The bravest wasna brave to bide
 The glitter o' her eyen.

The door was closed wi' stane & lime,
 That nane again micht see ;
 The haly priest wha biggit it
 Ane bitter task did dree,
 For aye upon him at the wark
 She leukit waefullie.
 He hung his haly cloak atween,
 And yet, ere he could ken,
 Fra 'neath the cloak her winsome face
 Was lookin' on again.

In after time ane scoffer came
 To spy that chamber dim—
 And lichtlie did he laugh & leuk
 Into the loophole grim,
 Until the Maiden's heid stood up
 And leukit furth at him.

Ye tower has sunk, & in its midst
 The grass grows green in spring,
 But will ye on St. Drostan's Eve
 Gae furth into the ring ?
 Will ye sit alane at midnicht
 And thro' the darkness glaum,
 Nor shiver when the Maiden's hair
 Comes lichtlie to your palm ?

At morn, when Essilmont was lost,
 His men gaed down the Howe—
 And the Maiden's form wi' never a heid
 Was lyin' cauld & low.
 His helmet lay where the reeds did sough,
 Ane glaive whare the pots did lour—
 But Essilmont down to the deid had gane,
 Wi' his mace & his strong armour.



1745.

She looked at noon from the castle gate
On the track that her clan had gone ;
She had nursed him in her merry teens—
The chief who led them on .
And well she knew the doom for him
If evil must betide ;
It could not be defeat and life
With that unbroken pride.

They had left her by a lonely hearth
To keep its fire alive ;
No heart to work—no work to do
For noon-day watches five.

She strayed into the banquet hall ;
She had not crossed its wing
Since on the morning of their march
They drank to Scotland's King.

Though fearful were the sword and gun
All burnished for the foe—
To hear amid the clansmen's joust
Wild word and warlike vow—
More fearful where they rang so loud
The gloomy quiet now.
The dreary table, splashed with wine,
Stood in the darksome hall ;

And goblets, o'er the shoulder flung,
 Lay broken in their fall ;
 The antlered skulls looked desolate
 And weirdly from the wall.

Alone, in the quiet of afternoon,
 She sat in the hope forlorn,
 That a straggler, with tidings of weal or woe,
 She might see from the wars return.

She had climbed to the loftiest airy room
 That looked to the setting sun,
 And away, on the deep of a southern glen,
 That led to a world unknown ;
 But vainly she watched for a wanderer
 On the track that the clans had gone.

But the white sheep followed their fitful course,
 And plucked on the mountain brae,
 Or basked themselves on the sunny brow,
 And dozed in the breezy day ;
 The narrow acres of meadow corn
 Were mellowed with autumn's gold,
 But the hands that should reap it themselves might be
 In a bloodier harvest rolled.

She gazed till the softness of slumber fell
 On her vigil of lonesome care,
 And her eyes were closed to the summer hills,
 So weary, and yet so fair.

A shallow sleep—for she knew that all
 In the castle was calm as death,
 And the roll of the western breeze beyond
 She heard like a baby's breath.

Her head sunk low, and she dimly woke,
 And the hills in their hazy gleam
 Beholding dimly, again, afar,
 Was lost in a dreary dream.
 She started and slept again, till the sun
 Had sunk on the wild land's rim ;
 And broad awake when she looked around
 His glory was burning dim.

The glimmer of early autumn's eve
 Was brooding—nor night nor day ;
 A ruddy gloom on the meadow corn
 So still in the valley lay ;
 It seemed as if it had reddened on,
 And would redden there for aye.
 And on the peak the antlered stag
 Rose up against the sky ;
 And she knew no traveller crossed the heath,
 He stood so calm and high.

It is midnight, and she sleepeth not
 By her pinewood fire alone ;
 The winds that moan at the bolted gate
 In the dark, dark valleys moan.

And she—"There is sorrow in heavy store,
 The bodings of evil creep ;
 A change is near that I cannot tell ;
 O where do my clansmen sleep ?
 They will never return—or returning will know,
 As to all must be known in their way,
 That ere it be finished shall crumble the tower
 That is built of our worm-eaten clay—
 It is all but the wearisome flaring of hope
 To its desolate fading away.

"I know that the ghosts of the dead be come
 Those halls for their own to claim ;
 From yon dark corners they sadly look
 With me on a fading flame ;
 But my nerves are worn, and they quiver not,
 My heart—and it beats the same.

"But not to me in the sullen night,
 Not yet does the gloomy King,
 With his closing grasp, and his withering breath,
 The calm that is changeless bring—
 A calm that is hard to the morning bird,
 And soft to the weary wing.
 But I thank Thee—and more than for daily bread,
 Or the strength, though bewildered with fear,
 That hath carried me hitherto on and on—
 Oh, God ! that the grave is near.
 Oh, Glory ! the breast is a barren wreck
 Where thy wild fire flashed of yore ;
 And thy children who prayed for peace are laid,
 Oh, Love ! where they weep no more."

NOVEMBER.

The waning days of the Autumn cast
 The weight of a nameless ill,
 And the bleak hill seemed in the day of gloom
 To call to the higher hill—

“ My Brother of Ages ! weariest thou
 As the endless years go on ?
 The fields that lie in their parting green,
 The pines in their heavier moan,
 The winds that sweep where the harvest shone,
 And pass to the eastern sea—
 The flitting leaves and the silent birds—
 Are woeful as death to me.

“ Rememberest thou to the long remote,
 Unvarying tracts of time,
 When our solitudes to the winter scowled,
 Or shone in the summer's prime ?
 Nor any smoke of a cottage rose,
 Nor lamp in the darkening day,
 But the awful sigh of the forest broke,
 And rolled on the wilds away.

“ And looking over the lowland reach,
 In our solemn watch since then,
 We have seen it fuller and fuller flow—
 The stream of the sons of men.

From him who died in the winds of heaven,
In battle, or hunting the roe,
And found a bed where the mats of moss
On the stones of our cairns grow ;
To him who dies when physicians fail,
Nor the love of kindred saves,
And the dark coach bears him from silent rooms
Away to the garden of graves.
A hundred times we have seen it move
From the proud and the lowly home ;
We have felt the stately and reckless step
Grow feeble, and cease to come.

“ But not to us, though the breath of Doom
Be there, does it sound a name,
Though dimly sounding, as o'er the waste
Of a thousand years the same,
I see in the hours of the afternoon
The line of thy changeless brow,
And the clouds beyond, in the airy deep,
Returning sadly and slow.
Will the days of our mourning thus return,
Nor reach to their fated sum ;
And ever over a breaking dream
The cry of the weary come ? ”



[The following Ballads, from a manuscript very much faded, are by John Mair, in Mill of Birness, 1794 to 1850; they appear to have been written about 1816.]

MATJUAN.

O ye wha are sae buirdly chiel's,
 Sae valiant and sae wise !
 Your daddies a' were nought but feels,
 Wham ye may weel despise.
 Ye are sae gleg and clear o' sicht,
 Ye can see nought at a'
 O' what gae them fu' mony a fricht,
 And pleasure whiles nae sma'.
 Ye are sae bauld, 'tis nought to you
 Wi' banter to engage
 Auld Thrummie, wi' his cloutie crew,
 And sweep them aff the stage.
 Ye wrinkled witch ! ye ghost sae pale !
 Ye laughin' water-kelpie !
 Ye winsome fairies, a' farewell !
 Ye're ruined now—Guid help ye !

But hark, ye self-important fools,
 So sage and philosophic,
 Wha laugh at a' the ancient rules
 O' Satan's fearfu' traffic—
 Sma' debt the Muses owe to you—
 An edifying race
 Ye've banished ; nothing to the view
 Left, but an empty space.

Sma' debt—no faith they owe a debt
 O' wrathfu' declamation,
 And speedy payment ye sall get
 In paper circulation.

If to deride all former faith
 Is wisdom's consummation—
 If it is "man's chief end" to bathe
 In miry dissipation;
 Why, then, of course, 'tis very clear
 This age doth far transcend
 Whatever was; the world is near
 A climax, or an end.

I rede ye dinna crack sae crouse,
 Ye'd no be ill to scare,
 Sometimes the bickerin' o' a mouse
 Wad bristle up your hair.
 Ae glimpse o' his "black watch" wad cause
 Your hearts grow weak as water,
 Unhinge your tongues atween your jaws,
 Wad gar your teeth a' chatter.
 Ae touch wad dem the vital stream
 O' life—fix on the spot
 Your frozen frames—a wondrous theme
 To ages far remote.

A warning take by what befell
 A lovely pair, ochone!
 I' the bonny vale o' Netherdale
 Some fourscore years a-gone.

Good people there, baith auld and young,
 Can tell ye all about it,
 And creesh your hurdies wi' a rung
 Gin ye wad dare to doubt it.

Fain wad I paint that fatefu' glen,
 But who, alas ! could draw,
 Wi' grace and truth, a landscape, when
 The place he never saw ?
 Should Fancy from her hoards advance
 A bountiful supply,
 Some crabbit critic might pronounce
 The whole a damnéd lie.

But so it was. Grew there some tall
 Or short or fairish corn,
 And near it ran, runs still, and shall
 Run on—a weirdfu' burn.
 Ah, let the hapless man beware,
 Who makes it turn his mill.
 There is a vengefu' spirit there,
 Intent his blood to spill.
 The ruthless power that whirls the stane,
 Or rides the bickerin' wheelie,
 If he is caught their teeth between,
 Will crush him to a jelly.

Eight shearers 'mang the rieslin' grain
 Were drivin' on wi' speed,
 Nae haggmahush o' scythin' then,
 The reapers a' were gweed.

The callants then a' restit weel,
 Were clever, keen, and stark,
 For peat-faugh, thrissles, and muckfeal
 Were a' their simmer wark.
 Such were the men ; they were nae mere
 Machines like us, wha wearied
 Wi' constant toil thro' a' the year,
 Can never work wi' spirit.

So when the summer's lively green
 Had faded into yellow,
 Was mustered out ilk clever quean,
 And ilka sturdy fellow.
 In equal pairs, weel matched at first,
 They plied it late and early,
 A nd ilka stentin' thro' the hairst,
 They tried each other fairly.

The women, prompt wi' tongue and hands,
 Were ever for a boulie ;
 The men wad stand and twist the bands,
 And take it somewhat coolly.

But if by insult roused to hate,
 More deep their ire would burn,
 Till paid in usury the debt,
 They triumphed in their turn.
 But still with evening came anew
 Their merriment and daffin'—
 Rude joke or sang, wi' "strip o' blue,"
 Aye raised a roar o' laughin'.

Sometimes the shrill bagpipes a ball
 Would raise of such a sort,
 As cattle from the turnip stall
 Let loose to take their sport.

Aft dousely to the auld guidwife
 They'd listen, while she tauld
 Sic warlock stories as were rife
 In those guid times of auld,
 O' bogles drear, o' fairies fain,
 O' elfin knights combatin',
 O' a' the spells used to maintain
 A league wi' auld King Satan,
 Down frae the high accomplished airt
 Frae Italy imported,
 Unto the humble witch's pairt
 In pussy's shape wha sported.

But aftenest ran the theme upo'
 The strange adventures wrought
 By ane, the fearfu' tenant o'
 The black Matjuan pot.
 'Twas said, should maiden dare to walk
 Three times around the same,
 The gallant goblin forth would stalk,
 And to her hand lay claim.

They listened wi' becoming awe,
 Wi' reverence received
 The wondrous tale, save ane or twa
 Wha laughed and disbelieved.

Dalaiver, bred on Buchan's coast,
 A roving youth had been,
 And of the mighty sea could boast,
 Whilk few o' them had seen.
 Dashed on the rocky coast so bold,
 Her foaming wrath oft viewing,
 With what contempt might he behold
 The pigmy pot Matjuan !

His bold, unhallowed mind, alas !
 Too daringly rejected
 The goblin tale, yea, anxious was
 To have the fraud detected.

What brought him here the hairst to shear
 Tradition doth not tell ;
 Perhaps 'twas love, for it is clear
 His heart belonged to Nell.
 She was his neiper on the rig,
 A steady heuk and strang ;
 She was his partner at a jig,
 And like a lavrock sang.
 Her neck, tho' girt wi' rings o' sweat,
 Well rounded was and fair,
 And aye on Sunday—clean and neat—
 Few could wi' her compare.

But, oh ! like mony thousand mair,
 Love was the maid's undoing,
 Her giddy heart was led to share
 The laugh against Matjuan.

But let us to our tale return—
 Hot was that day accurst ;
 The stentin' out, beside the burn
 They sat, and cooled their thirst.
 'Twas good and clear as crystal war-
 That decks sweet lasses a',
 Wha, though the diamond's no for them,
 Wad fain hae something braw.

“ A necklace and a gown sae fine,
 As ye may choose them, Nell—
 I'll buy them, and they sall be thine—
 Wi' them ye'se get mysel',
 Gin ye will run against the sun
 Three times around Matjuan.”
 “ The bargain's done, I'll try't for fun,
 Tho' it should be my ruin.”

Wi' sage advice, ye needna doubt,
 To hold her back they strove,
 But Nelly's heart, elate and stout,
 Was stronger made by love.

Lightfooted, as a Highland roe,
 The nymph the race began,
 She leapt the burn, above, below,
 And round Matjuan ran.
 And ance about, and twice about
 The fearfu' pot she flew, an'
 She then began to sing and shout
 Defiance to Matjuan.

"Matjuan, Matjuan, ye're wonderful deep,
 The spirit that rules you is surely asleep ;
 But sleeping or waking, his power I defy,
 I'll three times surround you, and give him the lie."
 She trembled ; the ground trembled under her
 feet ;
 "O the flesh of a maiden is wonderful sweet ;
 Come, drink o' the brewst for your sake I've been
 brewin' ;
 There's fire in the bottom o' black pot Matjuan."

So from the watery dungeon rung
 A voice baith deep and hollow,
 And lo ! therefrom a phantom sprung,
 Quick as the eye could follow.
 He caught her by the flowing hair ;
 Nought from his grasp could clear it ;
 There was a cry of wild despair ;
 Oh ! did Dalaiver hear it ?
 He heard it—saw her pale as snow
 Projecting on the brink ;
 Her glazed eye smote his view, and lo !
 She in the gulf did sink.
 That look went to his heart ; 'twas such
 As had no import clear
 Of love, hate, pity, or reproach,
 Or aught save death-like fear.
 That look no pen, no pencil even
 The boldest could define ;
 From such a look, O gracious heaven,
 Preserve weak hearts like mine.

Like metal from the forge's flame,
 Plunged in a rapid river,
 So soft, then hard as steel, became
 The heart of bold Dalaiver.
 Her fate, his guilt, rushed on his mind,
 Reflection made him mad,
 And madness made him deaf and blind
 To event good or bad.

To dive, to swim, to sway the oar
 Expert, he wavered not,
 For love and vengeance, to explore
 Ilk recess of the pot.
 With steady hand his clothes he stript,
 Then like an alligator,
 With sudden plunge he downward dipt,
 And cleft the yielding water.

Deep in the bowels of the abyss
 A cavern drear he found,
 With various tools of rare device
 Infernal, hung around.
 Strange to his eye, he there beheld
 A gleaming fire ('twas curious),
 Whereon there hung a cauldron filled
 With pitch that boiled most furious.

Within that watery mansion drear
 How flames o' fire could burn,
 Let nae chiel' speir wi' faithless jeer,
 Nor treat the tale wi' scorn.

May not earth's awful depths contain
 Fire of such forceful powers
 As water serves but to sustain,
 As air doth nourish ours ?
 Perhaps 'twas lighted from a place
 Ae glare o' which would dry
 Old ocean's bed—make Arctic ice
 In vapour load the sky.

This suits you not, perhaps, but why
 Indulge conjecture vain ?
 Against such proof who dares deny
 All that we can't explain ?

He saw his Nell, but strange to tell,
 She with a frown saw him,
 And gave her charms to fill the arms
 Of that vile Goblin grim.

The drowsy air—how soft and mild
 When lulled in calm profound,
 Roused by the rapid tempest wild,
 It spreads destruction round.
 So by the mind's most frightful storm,
 Made stronger than a giant,
 Dalaiver seized the goblin form,
 Which in his grasp was pliant.
 Though writhing like a tortuous snake,
 And waulin' like a baudron,
 Wi' direful plunge he made him take
 His berth within the cau'dron.

In triumph turned he to the maid,
 And urged their rapid flight ;
 " I will be with you soon," she said,
 And vanished from his sight.
 She was unlike his former Nell
 As is the juice of lemon
 Unto sweet milk ; her voice the yell
 Was of infernal demon.

But here nae langer might he stay,
 His breath was sair, sair spent ;
 Wi' upward toil the light o' day
 He gained, exhaust and faint ;
 But O, the space o' ae half hour
 Had wrought sic change in him,
 Not threescore years o' labour dour
 Would mak' a man sae grim.

He tauld his tale—" In his ain pot
 I've put the Devil down,
 And frae my Nell a promise got
 She will be with me soon."

" Ye lose the time," said the goodman ;
 " The day declines wi' speed ;"
 And to the stentin' they began,
 But dowie was their meed.
 Their heuks were heavy, and the corn
 Was tough as wuddie wands ;
 Their backs were stiff, their gardies worn,
 And waufle were their hands.

Fu' lang they tugg'd, aye like to stick,
 They made sae little speed ;
 Wi' gloamin' cam' a fog so thick,
 It filled them a' wi' dreed ;
 And aye it fell, and fell sae fast,
 And roun' Dalaiver grew
 Sae thick and black, until at last
 It hid him frae their view.

Then on his rig the eident whack
 They heard o' shearers twa ;
 They deemed it was his Nell come back
 To help his rig to ca'.
 The kittle kemp began in haste
 To gie the branglers win'—
 They flaughtit, flew, and did their best,
 But a' were left ahin'.

Was heard awhile the ruefu' dirl,
 Then brief debate and violent—
 And then again a sair, sair skirl,
 And a' was hushed and silent.
 And still in silent gloom that scene
 Is wrapt, and shall be ever,
 For never mair was heard or seen
 O' Nelly and Dalaiver.



THE SPECTRE FUNERAL.

"Whaur will I get ane hardy wight,
 Wi' spirit stern and bauld,
 Will wander round Reemshill this nicht,
 And watch the cattle fauld ?
 The fauld it is weel fenced round
 Wi' fell dyke tall and strong ;
 A grisly beard o' threatenin' whins
 Projects its front along.

"But sure as I am standin' here,
 And fairmer o' Ardgrain,
 The nowt are witch'd, and a' our airt
 To haud them in are vain.

"For ever on ilk Friday nicht
 Since in that fauld they lay;
 When midnight's murky shades obscure
 The sky's last dyin' ray,
 They loup and rout as they were mad,
 Nae dykes can haud them in,
 They rin and bellow roun' the hill,
 And raise a mournfu' din.
 They jaup themsel's like famished hounds—
 They trample down the corn ;
 Sic havoc rude and shameless scaith
 Nae langer can be borne.

“He that will settle them again,
 And mak’ them keep the fauld,
 Shall in his hand a dozen merks
 O’ gweed hard clink be tauld.”

The sturdy young men shook wi’ fear,
 And shrinkit frae the task ;
 “The deed be mine,” auld Donald said,
 “Nae mair reward I ask.”
 Now seventy winters’ blasting winds
 Had bleached his locks of snow,
 But firm and steadfast were his limbs,
 And dauntless was his brow.
 His kith or kindred nane could tell—
 A Highlander from far—
 And he had served his country weel
 In Malbro’s bluidy war.

He firmly grasped his gweed pike staff,
 His plaid around him threw,
 And boldly up the hill gaed he
 The cattle fauld to view.

The sky sank down in solemn gloom,
 The night was warm and still,
 And, slowly as he paced along
 The summit of the hill,
 He thought on days of old when he
 The nightly round did tramp ;
 But soon, I ween, he saw a light
 That did his courage damp.

His stout heart beat, a clammy sweat
 Bedewed his cheek so wan,
 And quicker through his shrivelled veins
 Life's crimson current ran.

What gars the auld man stare sae wild ?
 What gars him stand aghast ?
 What gars him shiver like a child
 I' the cauld winter blast ?

He saw a pale blue, taper licht
 Slow glimmerin' through the gloom—
 He heard a feeble, female voice
 Lamentin' o'er her doom.

His bonnet blue upstarting stood
 Upon his bristling hair,
 His knees against each other fought,
 His sight grew dim wi' fear.
 But soon the sickly tremor fled,
 His courage came again ;
 " And shall I basely shrink," he said,
 " And make my promise vain.
 I've seen the artillery's horrid flare,
 Unmoved I've heard its roar,
 I've heard the dying shrieks and groans
 Of thousands bathed in gore.
 And shall a feeble moan at night
 My listening ears astound ;
 And shall a sickly, taper light
 My once stout heart confound ? "

As nearer drew the taper blue,
 Its gleam disclosed a sight
 That might have struck the boldest heart
 With horror and affright.
 For, borne by black pall-bearers four,
 A female corpse appeared,
 The dagged hair and face all o'er
 With clotted blood besmeared.
 The foaming bull, whose eye gleamed fire,
 The trembling ground uptore,
 The astonished herd, wi' discord dire,
 All joined in wild uproar.

“ Whare be ye gaun wi' sic a load
 I' the nicht sae drear and dark—
 Will ye tak' help ? ” They grinned, and said,
 “ Ye 're welcome to the wark.”
 And when he leaned him to the task
 He got ane heavy share,
 But for relief or help to ask
 He mightna budge for fear.

In silent mood they passed along
 And pierced the gloom profound,
 Their airy forms no breathing drew,
 And their footsteps gave no sound.

But weary grew the auld man's limbs,
 His airms were like to brak',
 And sair beneath the heavy load
 Was bent his auld, stiff back.

They haltit on the Boodie's Knowe
 To gie the auld man breath,
 His surly neebours glowered as grim
 And were as still as death.
 But ever and anon was heard
 A maiden's dying moan,
 And, mingling through that melting sound,
 A bitter, rending groan.

When they cam' to the dark kirkyard
 Ane new-dug grave they found,
 And the kirk bell, unmoved, was heard
 To vent a doleful sound.
 They slowly walked around the grave,
 They laid their burden down,
 And the auld man sweat afore he gat
 The green turf closed aboon.

But when the dowie wark was o'er
 And the blythe auld man got loose,
 He sain'd himsel' wi' serious grace,
 And the auld man grew fell crouse.
 "Now, by the high and holy name
 Of all the Sacred Three,
 The cause o' this unhallowed wark
 I charge you tell to me."

Ane goblin grinned and glowered on him
 Wi' wild, uncouth grimace,
 He raised a yell, baith fierce and fell,
 And wrung his grisly face.

But staunch and stiff the auld man stood
 Unto his feet sae bauld ;
 At length a voice, in milder mood,
 Did this sad tale unfauld :—

“ Prepare, auld man, to hear a tale
 Scarce fit for human ear—
 ’Tis known full well in deepest hell
 Though veiled in mystery here.

“ The fair Eliza dearly loved
 A youth of low degree,
 Whose master was his rival—rich
 And proud and false was he.
 Upon a night those lovers planned
 To meet each other there
 Where first on yon lone crag ye saw
 The gloomy, taper glare.
 And cruel was the guile that sent
 Dalgare to hear their tryst,
 And crueller the dark intent
 That rose within his breast.

“ Her love, on distant message sent,
 Wi’ a sorry heart is gane—
 Dalgare’s awa’, i’ the grey twilight,
 To meet Eliza then.
 He has put on a hireman’s dress
 To cheat the simple maid,
 And, ere she knew his hateful face,
 His arms were round her laid.

“ ‘What mean you thus, bold sir,’ she said,
 ‘I pray you to forbear.’
 ‘Grant me your love, sweet, charming maid,
 I’ll no refusal hear.’
 She struggled hard to quit his hold
 And wildly gazed around ;
 She on her distant lover called,
 The rocks gave back the sound.

“ The glow of life hath left the cheek,
 Her heart hath ceased to beat,
 And pale now lies the breathless maid
 In a cold swoon at his feet.

“ Did pity melt his stubborn soul,
 Or sweet compassion blest ?
 No, frantic rage burst all control
 And rankling tore his breast.
 ‘Must I then bear her scorn, and shall
 She live to tell my shame ?
 No, by the frowning heavens I swear
 Her blood shall quench my flame.’

“ The cold, steel blade he trembling drew
 Across her neck so white,
 Away the bloody knife he threw
 And shook with dire affright.
 She raised her eyes—one piteous scream—
 And life’s last pang was o’er ;
 Again they close in cold repose,
 And never open more.

“ The murderer fled afar, no more
His native land to view,
But still an angry conscience tore
His rankling wounds anew.
His flesh hath fed the lank, brown bear,
His bones are bleached snow-white ;
His sulky ghost, beneath our care,
Upon ilk Friday night,
Hath digged up her sad remains
With bitter groans and toil,
Still fresh and bleeding as when first
Enwrapt within the soil.
That heavy burden which this night
Your weary body bore,
He hath brought here in doleful plight
Thrice fourscore times before ;
And back again, with double pain,
Retraced the uphill road,
And down beneath the frowning heath
Replaced his awesome load.

“ Until he got a Christian’s aid
His toil was all in vain,
But now to dust the dust is laid,
No more to rise again.”



LA FINALE.

Seven years within her barren bound,
 And all her echoes dumb,
 The Church had stood ; and those alone
 Who worshipped last might come
 To worship now ; for such a doom
 The thoughtful King had laid :
 That thoughtless men might learn how.
 Their generations fade.

Time after time, as men grew old,
 The waning crowd had gathered there,
 And heard a hoary elder read
 The King's appointed prayer.
 And by the solemn warning given
 Seven years and seven between,
 And by the many blanks around
 Where parted souls had been,
 The worldling in his rainbow-chase—
 The miser by his heap—
 Earth's dreamers, on their dreams had felt
 A lizard conscience creep ;
 And some had woke to life, and some
 Had turned to heavier sleep.
 And from their earth's o'ershadowed face
 To earth they passed away,
 O'er a dim length of years, to One
 That are but as a day.

They slumbered as a glimmer grew
 Where clouds of tempest yawned—
 The year's last Sabbath breaking wild
 As e'er December dawned.

Alone amid their graves the Church
 Stood at the noon-day hour ;
 No feeble step from far or near
 Approached the fast closed door. *
 Amid the lorn rows within
 The pillars stood alone ;
 The Bible mouldered in its place,
 The dark aisle brooded on.
 The hoarse winds rushed upon the walls
 With cadences of woe,
 As last when dumbly listened there
 A scattered, aged few.

And cold into their breasts had sunk
 The surges passing by,
 As in the deep of gloomy night
 His hounds foreboding cry,
 When in a mansion of the past
 The lonely wakes and hears
 The muffled footsteps and the close
 Whisper of murderers.

Those aching hearts for ever stilled,
 The winter wail was borne,
 God, on the silence of thy house,
 So utterly forlorn.

Alone it broke the inner hush
 Save ever and again
 As wildly flung a naked branch
 Smote ghost-like on the pane.
 Beyond the panes no sunny ray
 Careered on all the grim
 And dreary, prairied circle lost
 In vapour driving dim.
 No living thing save, far and high
 Against the sailing grey,
 A flight of wild fowl steadily
 Winging away, away.
 Coldly the sullen river spread
 Its sedgy shores between,
 Dark shivers hurrying with the gusts
 Athwart its wintry sheen.
 Hard by where mouldered fallen stones
 O'er long-neglected graves,
 The tall, wild grass and nettle swung
 In the sad, airy waves.

A lonesome figure on the waste,
 Her mantle rudely blown,
 Faith, like a newly homeless child,
 Wanders and wanders on ;
 For her lost sister sorrowing
 Until their hands be joined,
 Or listening if she may but hear
 Her song upon the wind.

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